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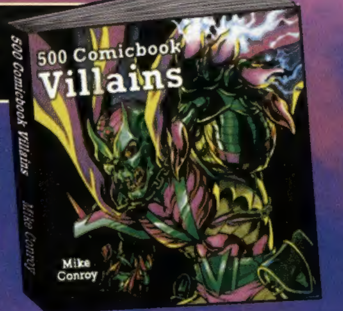

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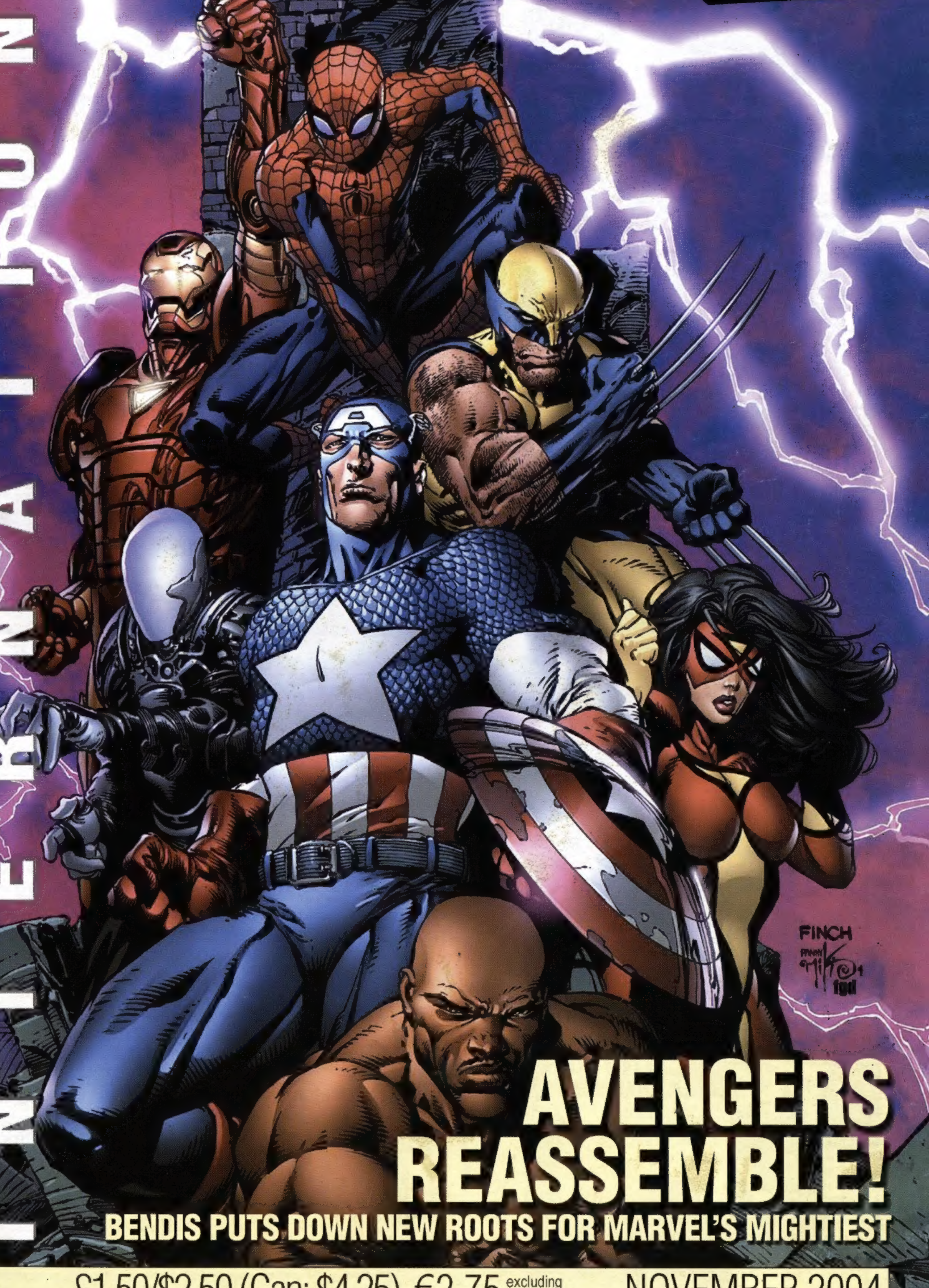

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#177 NOVEMBER 2004

Inside this issue

COVER: Everything old is new again as Earth's Mightiest Heroes, relegated to a secondary position by upstarts The Ultimates, take a new stab at the premiere league, courtesy of Brian Michael Bendis and David Finch. The surprise roster includes Wolverine, Spider-Woman, Luke Cage and the Sentry. Full story on page 14

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Sez Dez

Editorial
Dez Skinn

LOOKING through our lead news page is like taking a major tour through flashback city for me this month, seeing stories about properties I dabbled with 20 odd years ago.

Growing up at a time when kids were spoiled for choice at the newsagent's, I guess I took for granted many of the UK comics characters, being mesmerised by the four colour superheroes from America.

But, with a passion that only another collector would understand, I was a voracious beast for all forms of adventure strips. Once I'd consumed the month's DC and Marvel titles, I'd start on Charlton, Dell/Gold Key and Archie comics, then even **Classics Illustrated** and the puerile humour titles which never had the bite of anarchic homegrown mischief-makers.

British weeklies filled the gaps between shipments of US monthlies. So, like everybody of my generation, I grew up on *Karl the Viking*, *The Steel Claw*, *Robot Archie* and *The Spider*. But, except for those fantastic picture library editions, where you'd get 64 to 128 page complete stories, their two page a week instalments were never enough.

Perhaps that's why, when I was invited to take over producing the US editions of Judge Dredd and family, I quickly looked beyond the pages of **2000 AD**. Sadly, because I had no control over the print quality, no matter how good a job we did editorially with *The Steel Claw* and *Cursitor Doom* (or *Amadeus Wolf*, as we renamed him) they still didn't live up to my expectations. So we shut up shop, and comics newcomers Dave Elliot, Scott Dunbier, Peter Hogan and the rest of my team moved on.

Luis Bermejo's fantastic *Johnny Future* never made it beyond a house ad, *The Iron Man, Danger Man* and *Time Twisters* didn't even get that far. Shame, really – and very frustrating at the time.

Editor Alan McKenzie took a brief stab at the better known ones in 1992 in the **2000 AD Action Special**, but by then they were caught up in the kind of copyright chaos it took the might of AOL Time-Warner to sort out.

Now, as you'll see in on page 5, they're back – courtesy of WildStorm. Hopefully, this time America will get it right. There's this terrible tendancy to hijack popular Brit ideas and slap little-known US artists on them... *Judge Dredd* and *Miracleman* (with Michael Oeming and Chuck Beckum) being examples which leap to mind.

Maybe it's budgetary, low-risk publishing. But Shane (**Negative Burn**) Oakley seems an odd choice when many top UK artists would give their eyeteeth to draw such childhood heroes as *Frankie Stein, Janus Stark, Dolmann, Jack O'Justice* or even *Captain Hurricane* and *Mytek the Mighty*.

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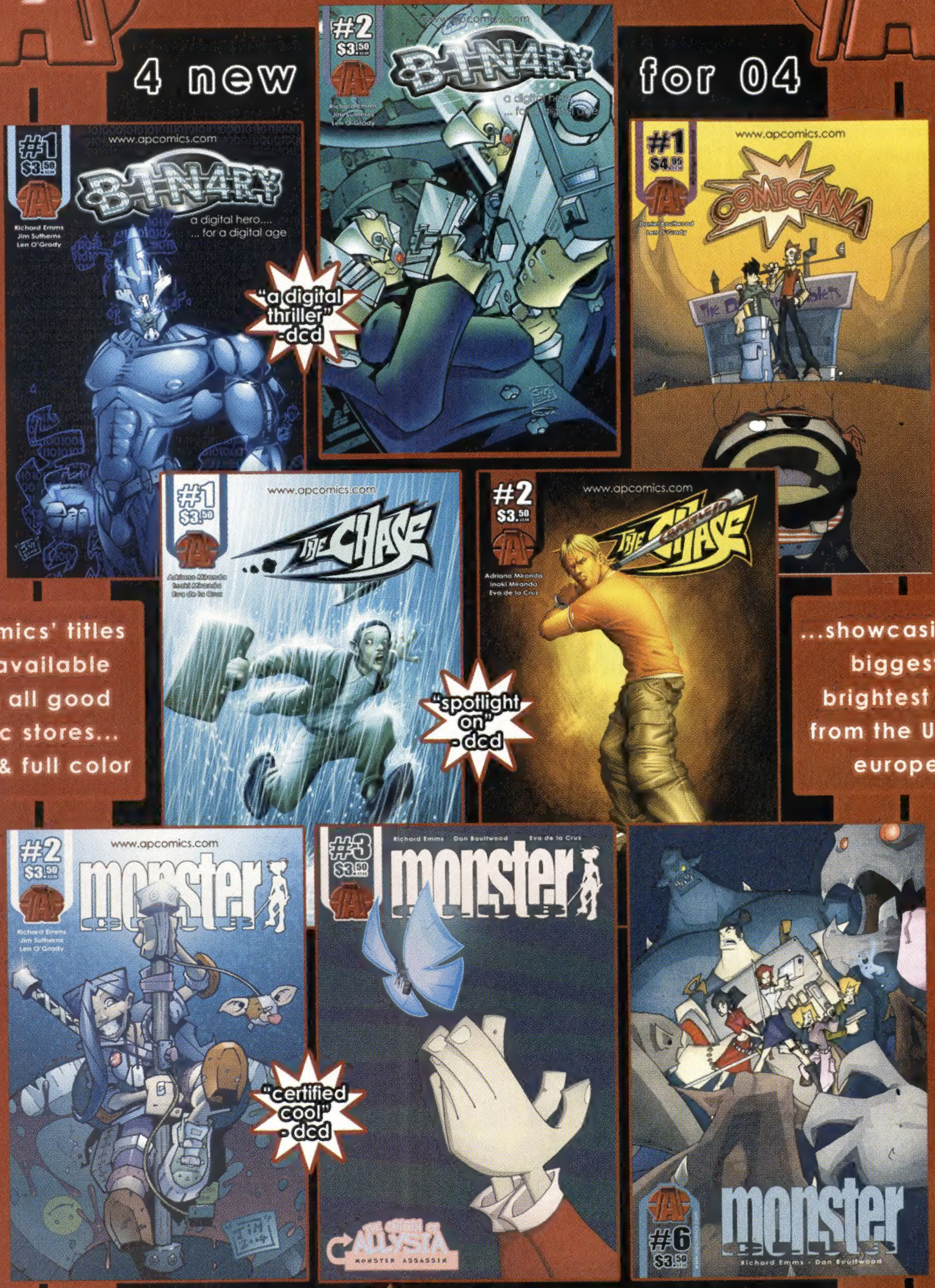
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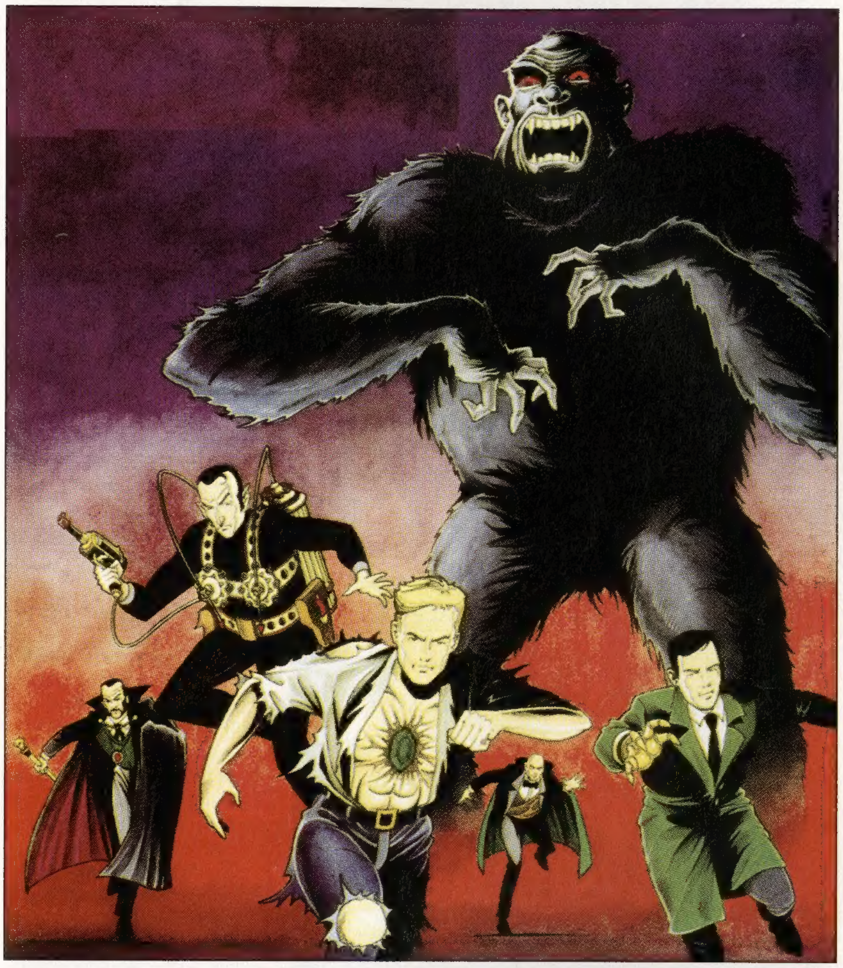
Alan Moore to resurrect IPC's heroes for America

*Acclaimed writer to introduce highly regarded British comics characters to US readers in **Albion** miniseries*



*Above: Mytek the Mighty towers over (from left to right) Dr Sin, the Spider, Tim Kelly, Cursitor Doom and the Steel Claw on the contents page for Fleetway Editions' 1992 one-shot, the copyright bending and irreverent **2000 AD Action Special**; art by Tim Bollard.*

BRITISH comics characters that all-but disappeared when IPC abandoned its line of weeklies in the mid-1970s are to get a new lease of life.

In a coordinated revival, the Spider, Robot Archie and other much-loved heroes are to be dusted off for a series of IPC reprint collections from Titan *[see below]* while writer Alan Moore is planning to revamp them for a WildStorm miniseries.

Albion is to be drawn by little-known US artist Shane Oakley. While Moore is plotting the series, it is being scripted by his daughter Leah and John Reppion, co-writers of **Wild Girl**, a WildStorm six-parter launching on November 10.

Miracleman return

No details have yet been made public as to which IPC heroes Moore intends using. It is also unclear how the Eagle Award-winning writer plans to reintroduce them or if he is looking to re-invent them as he did Marvelman when he revived that 1950s hero for **Warrior** in 1982.

The deal to bring the IPC characters back into print was brokered by DC's Bob Wayne, an acknowledged Anglophile, and IPC's **Uncut** and **Loaded** publisher, Andrew Sumner, a long-time comics fan. It became possible as a result of the British publisher's 2001 acquisition by Time-Warner, the international conglomerate that also owns DC, WildStorm's parent company.

Quirky heroes

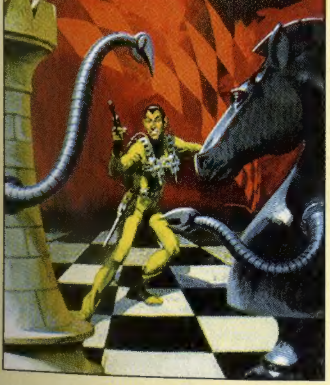
Approached by **CI**, Sumner said he was motivated by a desire to re-invigorate what were dormant and thus essentially worthless intellectual properties that he had a fondness for. He stressed that it should not be taken as an indication of IPC's desire to return to comics publishing, which was highly unlikely to happen especially as the licence grants WildStorm worldwide rights.

For his part, DC's vice president of sales and marketing, Bob Wayne, said IPC becoming part of the Time-Warner family prompted him to "try to find a way to let their characters come out of retirement and join the 21st century with the rest of us.

"There's some really interesting and quirky characters there," he told **CI**. "I knew from my many visits to UK conventions and from talking with the British writers and artists that work with us that a lot of them were very important characters to a lot of folks when they were growing up and reading those books. It was a shame to leave them in the vaults."

When pressed to reveal the IPC heroes appearing in in **Albion**, which is scheduled for next summer, Wayne diplomatically responded, "I think you will see all the ones you would expect to see. A number of those characters are pretty weird and I know which ones I would be interested in seeing."

Spider and Steel Claw reprints for Britain



*Above: The Spider features on the cover to **Fleetway Super Library** #10 [1967]; art by Alessandro Biffignandi.*

ON TITAN Books' publishing schedule for 2005 are the first two titles of a line that will make stories featuring IPC's adventure comics characters readily accessible to a contemporary audience.

While the new books will help plug the gap left by the loss of the London-based publisher's licence to reprint **2000 AD** material, there is another reason for setting it up editor Nick Jones suggested to **CI**. "Basically the time is ripe for a revival of these fondly remembered characters, which have lain dormant for far too long. The original comics are tough to track down and invariably in poor condition when you do find them, so it's only right that these impressive stories are given the treatment they deserve."

Superman's Siegel

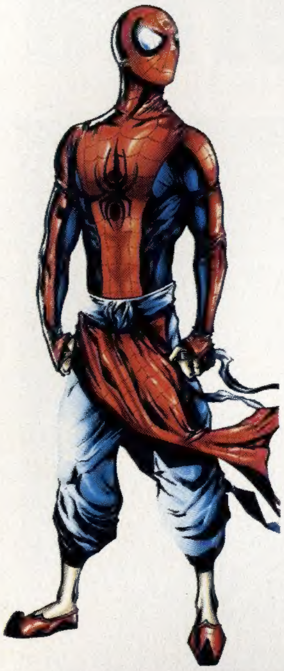
"As to the details of that treatment," he continued, "our first **Spider** collection is heading for a first quarter '05 debut. It'll collect strips chronologically from the beginning of the Spider's run in **Lion**, and crucially it will contain [Superman co-creator] Jerry Siegel's first story. There'll be lots of background material about the genesis of the strip, the creators and the IPC characters in general, so effectively our series of books will be the perfect introduction for anyone intrigued by Alan Moore's take on the characters *[see main story]*."

Jones also told **CI** that Titan has plans to follow **The Spider** with a second IPC title, which is to feature the Steel Claw.

● Something of an antihero, the Spider was created by Ted Cowan. He first appeared in **Lion**'s June 26, 1965 issue in a story drawn by Reg Bunn.

The Steel Claw preceeded him by almost three years, debuting in **Valiant** on October 6, 1962. His early adventures were all drawn by Jesus Blasco and written by SF author Kenneth Bulmer.

Bangalore publisher recreates Spider-Man



Marvel's flagship character gets radical overhaul for marketing as India's home-grown superhero

IN A process described by Sharad Devarajan as reverse globalisation, Marvel's South Asia licensee is planning to "make an international hero also a local hero."

Devarajan is president and chief executive officer of Gotham Entertainment. A Bangalore-based publisher, it also holds the rights to produce English and other language editions of comics from DC and Dark Horse among others across the region.

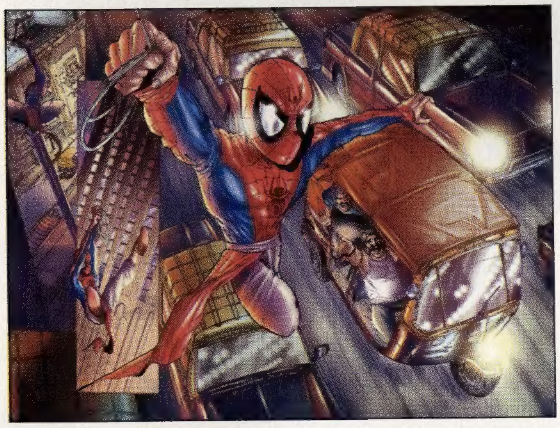
Spider-Man India is Gotham's most ambitious project to date. Speaking to **CI** about the four-parter, Devarajan said, "Unlike literal translations of US comics into a foreign market, this is a 'transcreation' where we actually reinvent the origin of a property like Spider-Man so that he is an Indian boy growing up in Mumbai and dealing with local problems and challenges."

Devarajan, who is based in the US, said the miniseries came about as a result of discussions with Marvel's Gui Karyo and Dan Buckley on how to enhance Gotham's current line of Marvel titles. "This project is really an evolution of our existing publishing programme and a desire to aggressively build the superhero genre and medium of comicbooks in the Indian market."

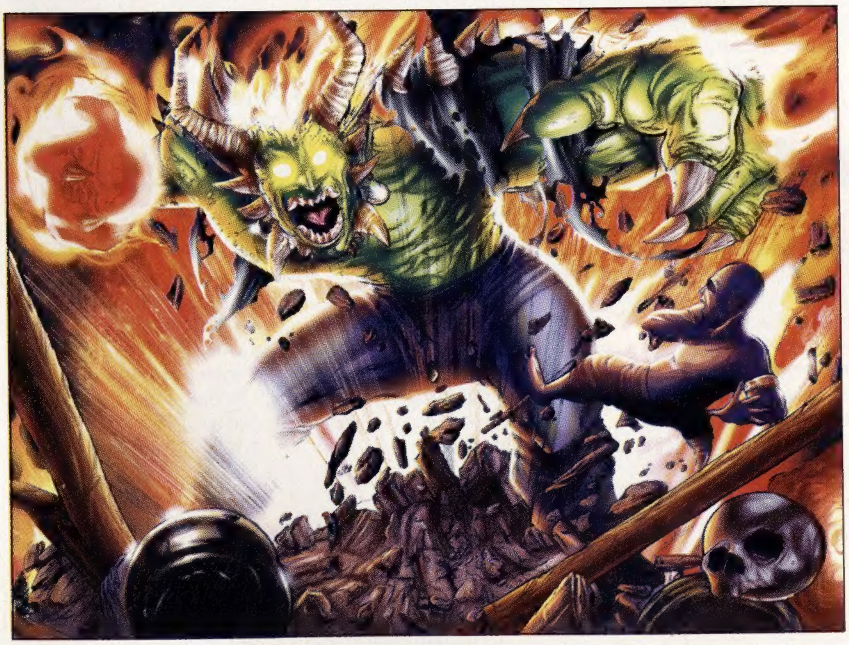
Indian superhero

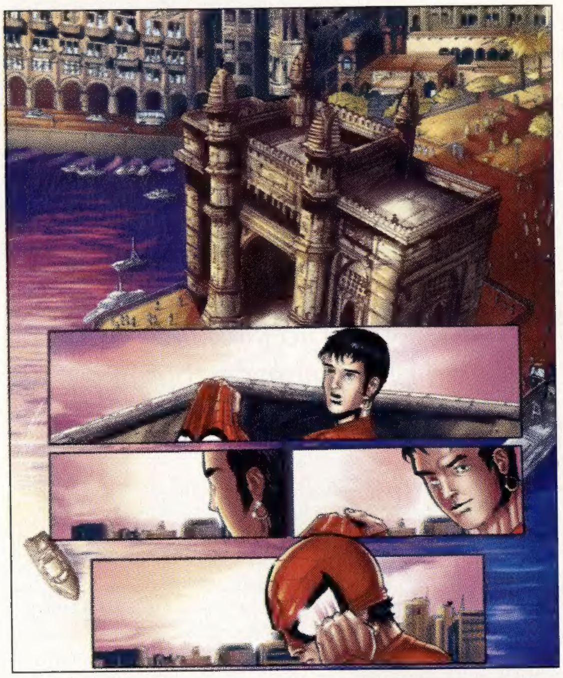
"Since Suresh [Seetharaman, Gotham's chief operating officer] and I founded Gotham in 1997," Devarajan continued, "we have always dreamed of fully integrating a western superhero character into the Indian market in this revolutionary way."

Spider-Man India is to premiere in the US on November 17 following its earlier South Asia launch. It is co-written by Devarajan, Seetharaman and Gotham's studio head Jeevan J Kang, a comics newcomer who also drew the $2.99 series.

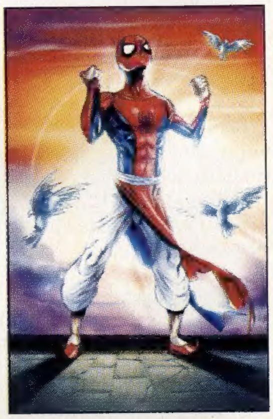


Art from Jeevan J Kang's first published comic – double-page spreads from ***Spider-Man India*** *#1 [above and below] and cover art for the second issue of the Marvel/Gotham Entertainment four-parter [top].*





Above and below: Jeevan J Kang interior pages for ***Spider-Man India*** *#1.*



"Suresh, Jeevan and I have always believed that the superhero relates to a 'universal psyche' already firmly established in India through centuries of mythological stories depicting gods and heroes with supernatural abilities," explained Devarajan, who said the project is the "culmination of a synthesis allowing us to interweave the ethnic and mythological themes of India into Spider-Man's origin and powers."

Pavitr Prabhakar

"This miniseries offers a most unique way to really make an international hero also a local hero," he added. "One of the greatest aspects of people's identification with a character like Spider-Man is the fact that he lives in the real world rather than a fictitious city. For Indian readers to see, for the first time, this new version of Spider-Man bouncing off rickshaws and climbing local monuments like the Gateway of India will be great fun and hopefully bring in many new readers ready to experience this great character for the first time.

"Even the names of the key characters are going to be transformed to Indian equivalents: Peter Parker to Pavitr Prabhakar; Mary Jane to Meera Jain; Uncle Ben to Uncle Bhim and Aunt May to Aunt Maya for example," Devarajan stated. "The goal is to really reinvent the origin of Spider-Man so that he is an Indian boy growing up in Mumbai, swinging from local monuments and dealing with local problems and challenges which readers in this market can more readily identify with."

Although he refused to divulge specific story details Devarajan stressed Gotham has remained true to the underlying mythos of Spider-Man, which, he notes, is enshrined in the phrase, "with great power comes great responsibility."

Indian demon

"Unlike the US origin, which is deeply rooted in science, the Indian version is more rooted in magic and mythology," he explained. "Our version of Spider-Man will gain his powers from an ancient mystic in order to combat the evil threat of the Green Goblin, who is being reinvented as a modern day Indian demon from myth."

● In 1969, Marvel recreated Spider-Man for the Japanese market but the move went virtually unheralded in the US. Written and drawn by a pre-**Mai, the Psychic Girl** Ryoichi Ikegami, it was eventually published in America across the 31 issues of 1997's biweekly **Spider-Man: The Manga**.

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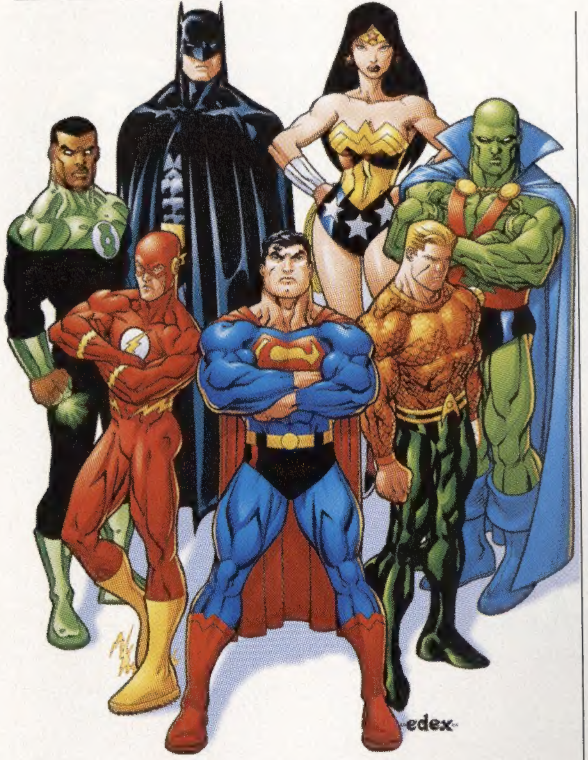


DC makes it two for premiere team

WHILE DC weakened its premiere superteam franchise with a wave of early 1990s titles, Mike Carlin told **CI** that since early 2003, when he became editor, he has been actively encouraged to establish a full line of **JLA** comics.

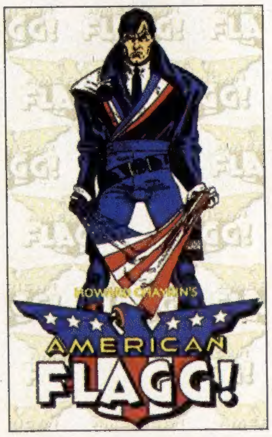
Not only has this led to such limited series as **JLA: Haven** and the recently launched **Justice League Elite** but also to a second ongoing title.

JLA: Classified results from Carlin asking top writers and artists – those who could not or would not commit to the "monthly grind" – to produce serials as a stand-by. "That's what I did – as inventory for the regular **JLA** series but after we saw who we were lining up and the interest in general we decided to make more room for **JLA** on the stands."

The $2.95 series is in the **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight** mould, with stories produced by different creative teams and set in any era of the JLA's existence.

Classified kicks off on November 3 with a three-parter drawn by Ed McGuinness and Dexter Vines *[#1 cover art above]*, written by the man who reinvigorated the **JLA** franchise in 1997, Grant Morrison.

Chaykin's new Flagg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HOWARD CHAYKIN'S
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IMAGE and Dynamic Forces are planning a coordinated assault on the market for 1980s comics.

On November 24, Image is to offer the first 12 issues of Howard Chaykin's Eagle Award-winning **American Flagg!** [First, 1983] – plus a nine-page prelude – in two $19.95 trade paperbacks.

Simultaneously, Dynamic Forces is to release the same material in a deluxe $49.95 hardcover. A 376-pager, it also includes a new 12-page story Chaykin has written and drawn for the edition.

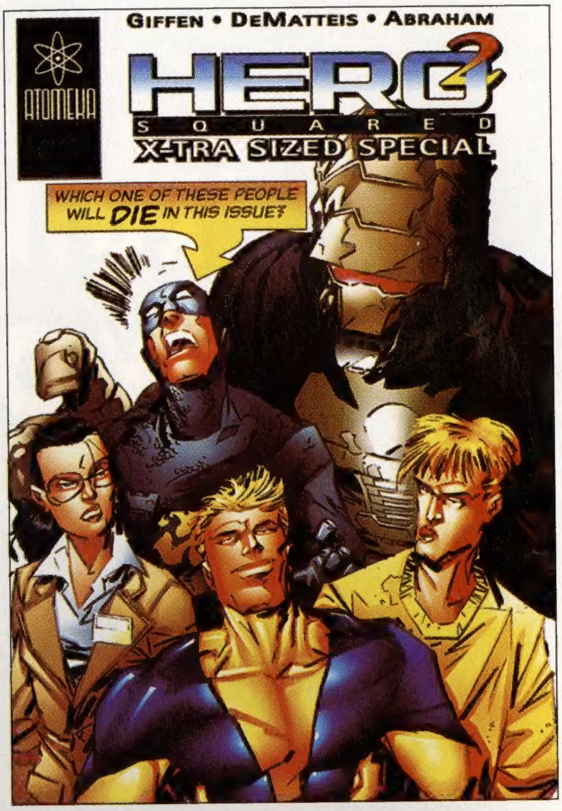
Giffen and DeMatteis's own superhero debuts

WITH their profile raised by 2003's **Formerly Known as the Justice League** and follow up, **I Can't Believe it's the Justice League** – possibly destined for **JLA: Classified** *[see left]*, Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis are to unleash their unique brand of humour on a UK publisher.

The writers are moving to Atomeka for a one-shot to continue telling their tongue-in-cheek superhero adventures, an approach they popularised with their 1987 revamp launch of **Justice League**. Drawn by **Hellhounds**' Joe Abraham, the new **Hero Squared X-Tra Sized Special** is the story of Milo, a man who meets a version of himself.

This alternate Milo is from a parallel world where he is a superhero. Known as Captain Valor, he moves in with Milo and starts putting the squeeze on Milo's girlfriend. That is, until a universe-destroying supervillain suddenly comes gunning for him.

- Dormant over 10 years, Atomeka has been restarted by Dave Elliot and Garry (**Marvelman**) Leach, who founded it in 1989.


GIFFEN • DEMATTEIS • ABRAHAM
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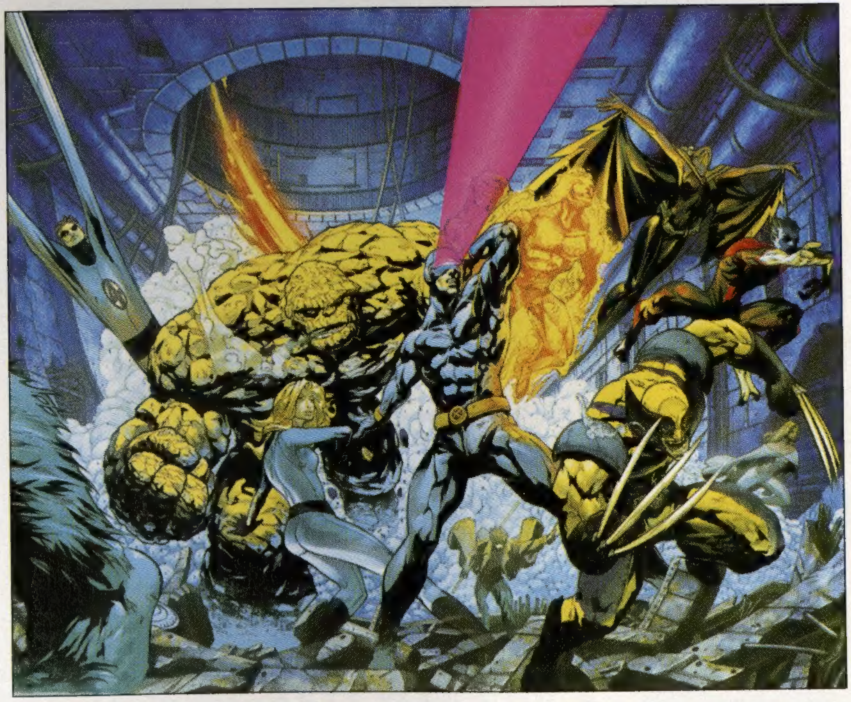
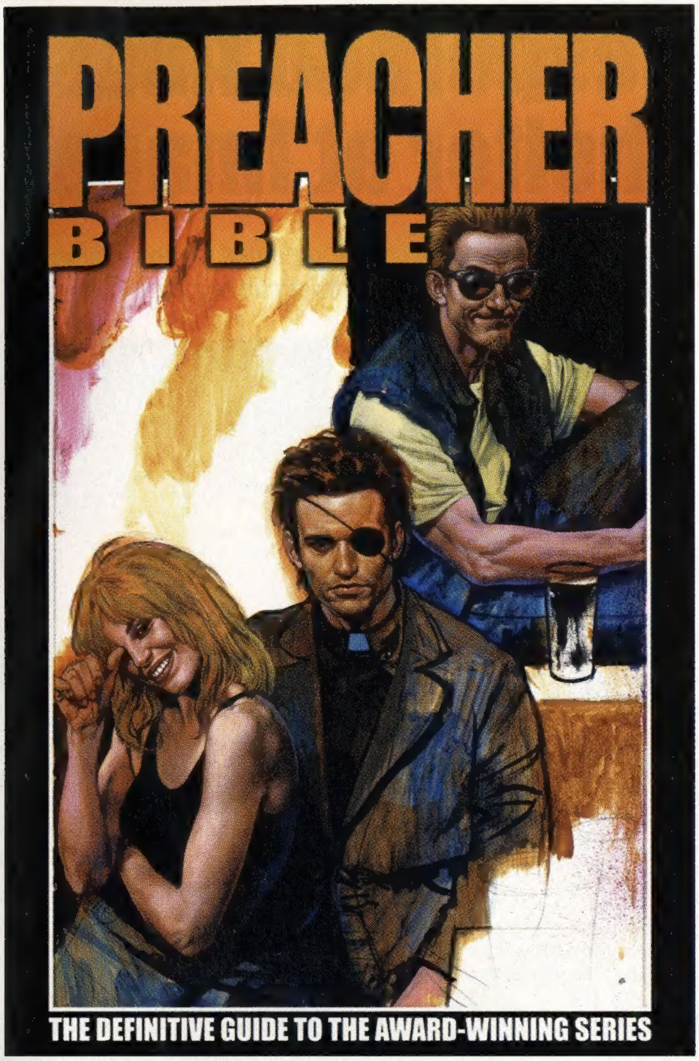
X-TRA SIZED SPECIAL
WHICH ONE OF THESE PEOPLE WILL DIE IN THIS ISSUE?

Atomeka's 32-page ***Hero Squared X-Tra Sized Special****, which ships in November, features cover art by Kevin Maguire. For the alternate edition of the $3.50 one-shot [see cover above], Keith Giffen provides his version of Maguire's cover to* ***Justice League*** *#1 [1987].*



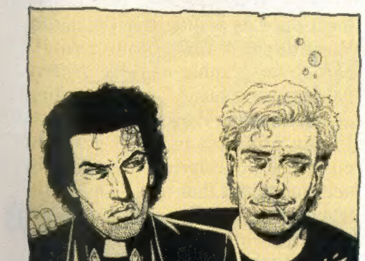
WITH his first comics work – the **Thor: Son of Asgard** *six-parter – recently upgraded to ongoing status and placed under the* Marvel Age *banner, writer Akira Yoshida is adding a third assignment to a resumé that also includes a just-launched five-issue* Marvel Knights *series:* **Elektra: The Hand**. *Another five-parter,* **X-Men/Fantastic Four** *brings together Marvel's first family and its top-selling mutant team to tackle an outer space menace that is threatening Earth. The comic, which premieres on December 12, is pencilled by* **Transformers: Generation One***'s Pat Lee with finishes provided by his DreamWave Studios art team. Shown above is Lee's wraparound cover to the first $3.50 issue.*


PREACHER
BIBLE
THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO THE AWARD-WINNING SERIES

Preaching to the converted

FLUSH WITH the success of its inaugural book launch, **Comics International** publisher Quality Communications is analysing a further comics cult in its second title.

While **Comix: The Underground Revolution** looked at the hedonistic lifestyle surrounding the 1960s counter-culture titles, Tim Pilcher's **Preacher Bible** takes an in-depth look at a specific series, Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon's DC/Vertigo title, **Preacher**.



Above: A little-seen 1996 Steve Dillon self-portrait, having a Guinness with the man. Top: The unfinished Glenn Fabry cover painting.

Behind a new painting by series cover artist Glenn Fabry, the book acts as the definitive companion and guide to the award-winning series.

Fully sanctioned by and with input from the title's creators, it features exclusive interviews with every person involved with **Preacher**, including guest artists, colourists and editorial teams, and is accompanied by rare, obscure and never-before-seen sketches, artwork and photos.

Every issue is broken down and discussed with a "director's commentary" and there are chapters on the merchandise, character biographies, timelines, maps and exclusive information on the forthcoming feature film. A section is also given over to the "lost" **Preacher Special**, *The Sex Detectives*.

Foreign editions

Full colour throughout and in the same format as the **Preacher** trade paperbacks, the 256 page softcover is awaiting completion of contracts for foreign language editions before being scheduled by Quality.

Already, great interest has been expressed in Spanish and Italian editions. So, with the book being promoted at the Frankfurt Book Fair this month, an early 2005 on sale date is anticipated.

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Desperado finds shelter at Image

Former Caliber editor attracts top names to new imprint which kicks off with resurrection of cult favourite superhero

A DECADE and a half after he started his comics career by assisting on **Flaming Carrot** #23, writer/editor Joe Pruett is reviving the cult favourite comic as the inaugural title for his new Image imprint.

Initially, Pruett planned to go solo with Desperado Publishing but, as he explained to **CI**, he was eventually sold on the idea of coming in under the Image umbrella after he was approached by the California-based cooperative. "After a few conversations back and forth and concessions on each side, we came to an agreement that both parties could live with. Image can do a lot to help Desperado and Desperado can do a lot for Image, so here we are."

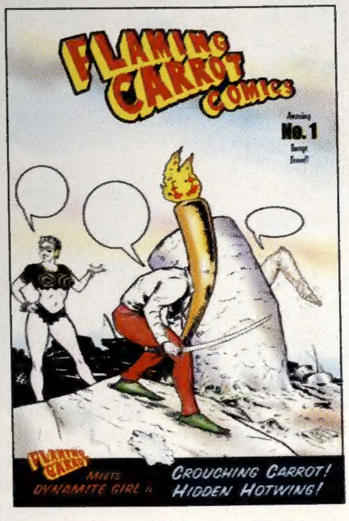
Commenting on his publishing philosophy, Pruett said, "I don't concern myself with having to be limited by genre or such. Instead, I just focus on the quality of the material and the reputation of the creative team. I publish what I like. No rules. No regulations."

Heart and soul

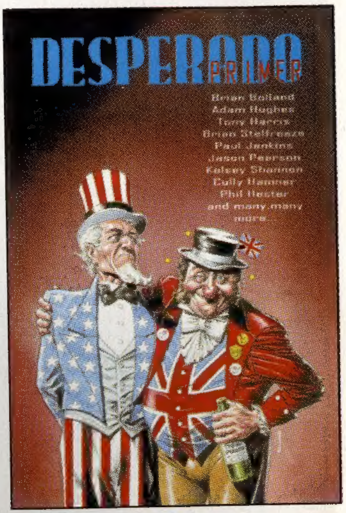
Asked what typifies a Desperado comic, Pruett responded, "Creative talent putting their heart and soul into the stories. Each project will be that creator's own personal vision.

"For instance," he explained, "Tony Harris's project, **Roundeye**, is a love story that he has written for his wife. You can guarantee that his work will be his best ever because he's doing it out of love and not for monetary reasons. Creators aren't doing these projects for profit but rather for pride."

Desperado launches on December 29 with the first quarterly issue of Bob Burden's revived **Flaming Carrot**. Simultaneously, it is to offer an indication of its talent roster and the projects it has in the pipeline via a sampler, the **Desperado Primer**.



Above: The cover to the first $2.95 issue of Image/Desperado's quarterly ***Flaming Carrot****; art by Bob Burden.*



Above: The cover of Image's $1.99 ***Desperado Primer****; art by Brian Bolland.*

Announcing just some of his plans, Pruett said, "Brian Bolland and P. Craig Russell will have nice, high-quality art books devoted to their art and careers. We're looking at presenting a retrospective of both their illustrious careers and not just releasing a pin-up book. Phil Hester and John McCrea are teaming up on a new series titled **The Atheist**, set to debut in February. And Paul Jenkins is writing an original graphic novella tentatively titled **My Castle in the Sky** – but we haven't decided on an artist at this point."

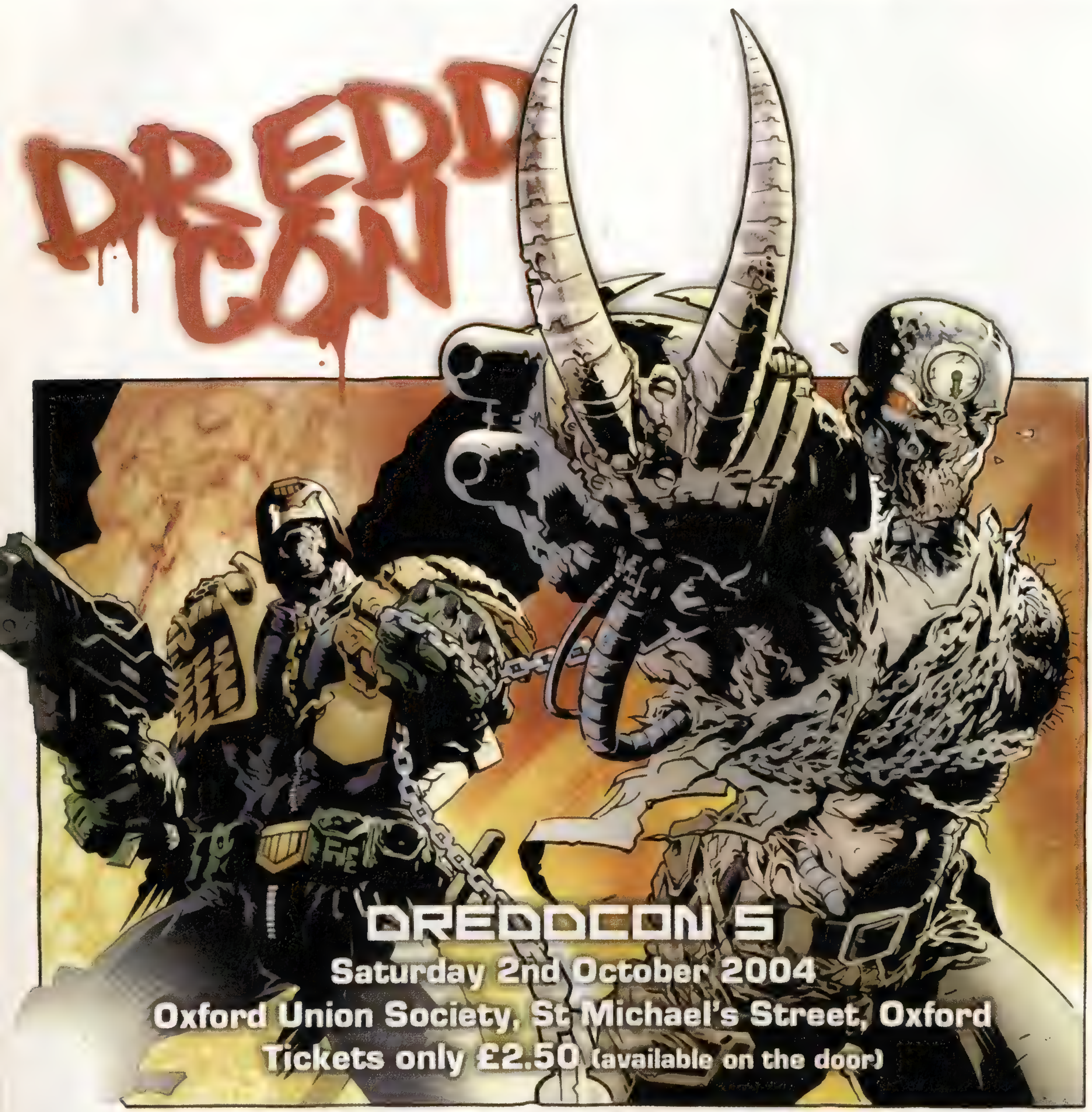
Freak Show

"Tony Harris, as previously mentioned, is writing and illustrating **Roundeye,** a full-colour two-set hardcover graphic novella. Jimmy Palmiotti and Justin Gray are writing another series, **Widowmakers**, that Jimmy promises is really going to push the boundaries. I'm a little nervous about that one," he added, laughing.

"Andrew Robinson and I are bringing back our former Image series, **Dusty Star**," he continued, noting tortuously that it had "somehow gained somewhat of a massive cult following."

He will also be collecting Bernie Wrightson and Bruce Jones's *Freak Show*, which ran as a serial in **Heavy Metal** in the early 1980s. "Beautiful work," he commented, adding that he also has a Brian Stelfreeze project and a couple of others by well-known creators in the pipeline.

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY, CREEPS...
...AND WE AIN'T TAKING NO BUTTS!



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Green Lantern writer unveils his Samurai

RON MARZ is to introduce a second Japanese hero in the wake of the demise of **The Path** – aborted as a result of CrossGen's recent collapse.

Discussing his new five-issue Dark Horse series with **CI**, Marz – best known for replacing Hal Jordan with Kyle Rayner as Green Lantern – said, "I guess the Hollywood pitch would be 'a samurai meets the Three Musketeers,' although that really addresses just one aspect of the story. The more accurate version is that **Samurai: Heaven and Earth** follows a samurai who travels from Japan, to China and then across Asia and Europe as he pursues his lover, who has been stolen away from him.

"Eventually," the writer continued, "we reach 1704 Paris, and the court of Louis XIV, where the samurai becomes embroiled in a plot against the king. It's a fish out of water story that owes as much to Dumas as it does to Kurosawa."

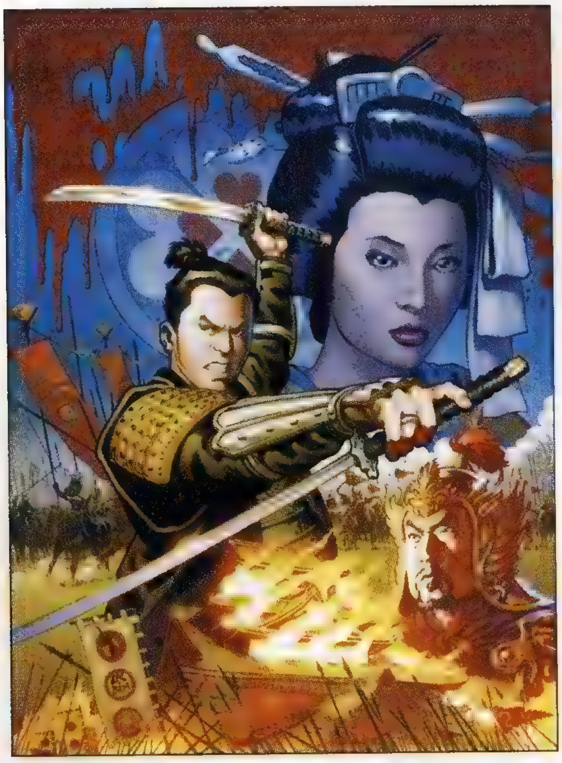
Magical weapons

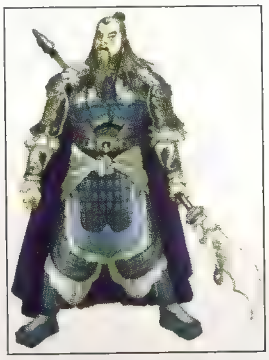
Asked about similarities between this project and his now-defunct CrossGen title, Marz responded, "Obviously there are going to be comparisons, which is perfectly valid. Both stories involve samurai. But I think the real difference is that **The Path** was more of a fantasy because it was set in a comicbook universe. It looked like feudal Japan but it wasn't. There were gods and demons and magical weapons and the lead character was a monk rather than a samurai. As I've said, that's not a... uh, path that I wanted to go down again.

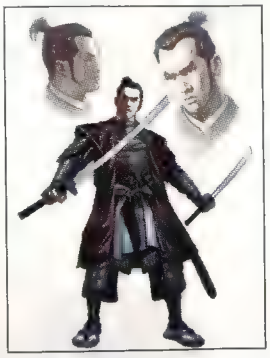
"I wanted to do a straight historical adventure, one that actually starred a samurai. So **Samurai: Heaven and Earth** has none of those fantasy elements. As much as I enjoyed what we did on **The Path**, I think this is a lot more accessible to a casual reader," added Marz, who is joined on **Samurai** by Luke Ross. Another CrossGen refugee, the Brazilian **Scion** artist recently partnered Marz on his six-issue return to **Green Lantern**.

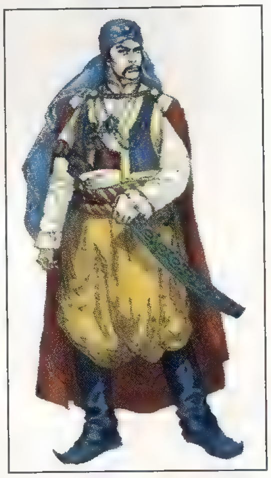
"As far as where the story came from... I really don't know," confessed Marz, who admits to being a sucker for period dramas and historical epics. "Sometimes it's like that, especially with the good ideas. It's like the story was always there, buried, and you're just the archaeologist who comes in and uncovers it. I'd wanted to write a historical samurai story and at some point the image of a samurai facing off against the king's Musketeers popped into my head. Then it became a question of how we get to that scene, of building a story that brings us to that point."

Samurai: Heaven & Earth #1, priced $2.99, ships December 1.









*Above: Luke Ross's art for the cover to the first issue of **Samurai: Heaven and Earth**. Above right: Character studies for the new Dark Horse five-parter; clockwise from left: a warlord, Shiro – the hero of the series – and a slave trader.*

Waid revives Legion

THEY may now be in their fifth decade but the 30th century teenagers who form DC's Legion of Super-Heroes are proving less successful with each passing year.

Always popular and often cover featured but consigned to starring in back-up strips, the team eventually took over **Adventure Comics** – the comic in which it made its 1958 debut – in 1966.

The Legion finally got its own title – ousting Superboy from his – in 1980. Since then, **Legion of Super-Heroes** has been relaunched, revamped and/or rebranded five times; six if the linked **Legion Lost** and **Legion Worlds** series are taken as separate projects.

The Legion, the most recent title, lasted 38 issues. Cancelled in August, it is now being replaced by a new **Legion of Super-Heroes** series. A $2.95 monthly, it launches out of **Teen Titans/ Legion**, an October-shipping one-shot written by Geoff Johns and **Fantastic Four**'s Mark Waid.

The latest relaunch kicks off on December 29 when Waid is joined on the title by his **Empire** partner, British artist Barry Kitson.

*Above: From Barry Kitson's art for the cover to DC's latest **Legion of Super-Heroes** #1.*

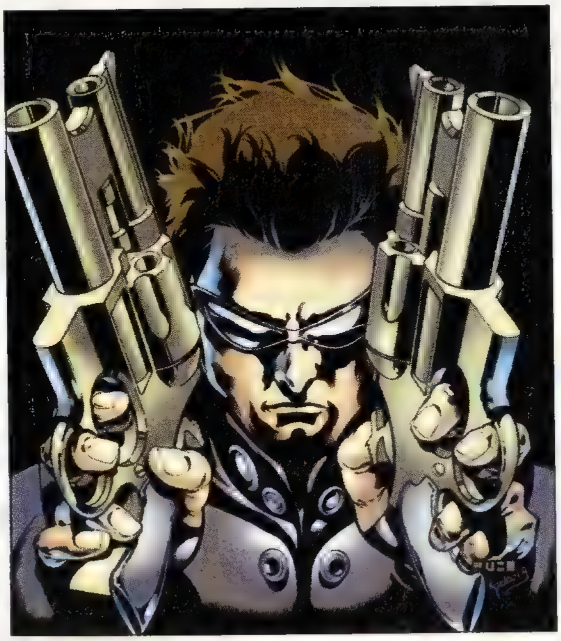
Detonator explodes at Image

FOLLOWING their recent collaboration on AP Comics' **Faro Korbit** four-parter, Mike Baron and artist Mel Rubi are staying together for an Image series the writer described to **CI** as a thinking man's action comic.

Detonator is the story of Frank Grace, a mining engineer who is the sole survivor of a disaster in which 125 of his colleagues perished.

When he learns that the explosion was orchestrated by 20 Step Vipers to collect the life assurance on the mine's employees, he strikes back against this centuries-old Triad. But they are protected by Manglebaum. Like Grace, he is a munitions expert but he is also a master assassin and had blown up the mine.

The Detonator #1, priced $2.50, ships on November 17.



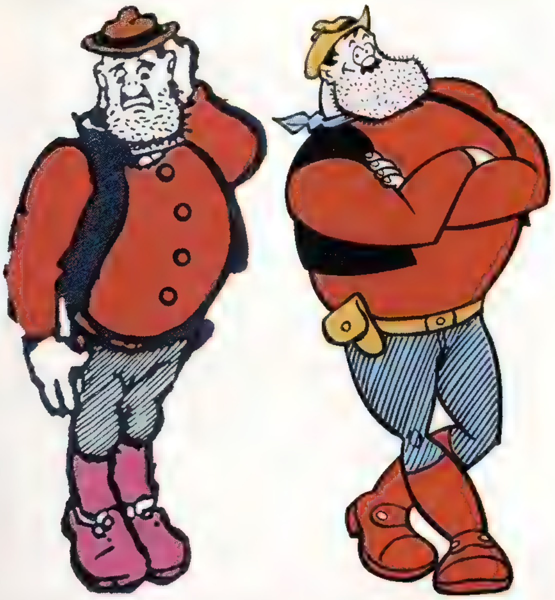
*Above: Cover art for the second issue of Image's **The Detonator**; by series artists Mel Rubi and Barbara Kaalberg.*

World's oldest gets face-lift

WITH sales of **The Dandy** down from almost two million a week in the 1950s to a current 45,000, DC Thomson is giving the comic a radical makeover.

Beginning with the issue on sale on October 7, the world's longest running comic is getting a physical facelift – upgraded from newsprint to glossy paper and the page count increased from 32 to 44 – as well as an overhaul of its contents.

The changes to the 67-year old comic bring with them a substantial 60% price hike – from 75p to £1.20. Proclaimed by a strapline: **The New Dandy** – *Can You Handle It?*, they are intended to give the title more appeal to today's seven to 11-year olds.

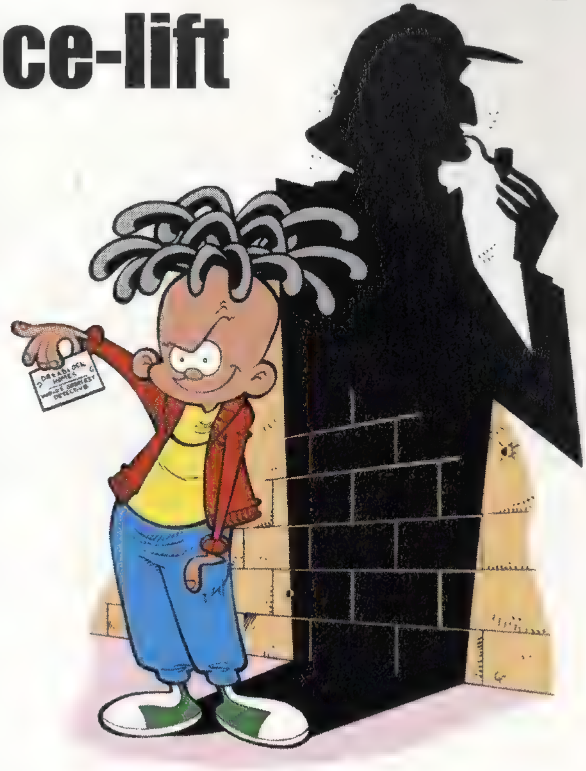


Spot the difference: Desperate Dan before and after his makeover.

Dan goes PC

The Dandy is known for its anarchic humour and the Dundee-based publisher says the new look incorporates that approach. It suggests the changes "mischievously challenge the constraints of political correctness but with the emphasis, as always, on harmless fun."

Desperate Dan has been in **The Dandy** since its December 1937 first issue – a copy of which recently sold at auction for a world record of £20,350. He is still to feature although he is to get a 21st century makeover. Despite the visual left, this is said to relieve him of some of his weight together with his gun, spurs, smoking habit and love for cow pies.



Above: **The Dandy** newcomer Dreadlock Holmes; art by Craig Graham, who created the amateur sleuth.

Korky the Cat and Beryl the Peril are being relegated to supporting roles to make way for a new wave of stars led by Dreadlock Holmes. **The Dandy**'s first ethnic minority lead character, the amateur sleuth stars alongside Jak, a troublesome schoolboy always up to no good. Also to debut is *Office Hours*, which takes readers behind the scenes as the 'fictional' editorial team puts together a comic amidst seeming chaos.

- As part of its £600,000 marketing budget for the relaunch, Thomson is to give 200,000 copies of **The Dandy** away to schools.

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In Brief

UNDERGROUND comix legend Robert Crumb is working on an ambitious project for a prestigious mainstream publisher, one that will take him two years to complete.

His agent, Denis Kitchen, advised **CI** that the renowned cartoonist is currently drawing an adaptation of *Genesis*, the first book of **The Bible**, for W W Norton. Kitchen anticipates the project is unlikely to be published before 2007.

EVEN though the first three Free Comic Book Days were held as tie-ins with the US release of major comics-based movies (*Spider-Man*, *X-2* and *Spider-Man 2* respectively), American retailers have voted for future FCBDs to be held at the same time each year.

They have chosen the first Saturday in May – the anniversary of the inaugural FCBD – as likely to produce the best results. Next year's Free Comic Book Day is to be held on May 5 despite *Batman Begins* premiering in the US just over a month later, on June 17.

GUI KARYO left Marvel in early September. He is been replaced by Alan Fine, who becomes Marvel's president of publishing and chief executive officer, positions he also holds in the company's ToyBiz division.

Appointed at the same time as Fine was David Cho, who takes over Karyo's role as chief information officer.

ALSO gone from Marvel is the Andrew Lis.

The former press officer has left the industry to pursue a career working in environmental protection. His duties have been assumed by David Gabriel and Darren Kane.

MIKE Mignola's next **Hellboy** spin-off is to star the B.P.R.D.'s Abe Sapien.

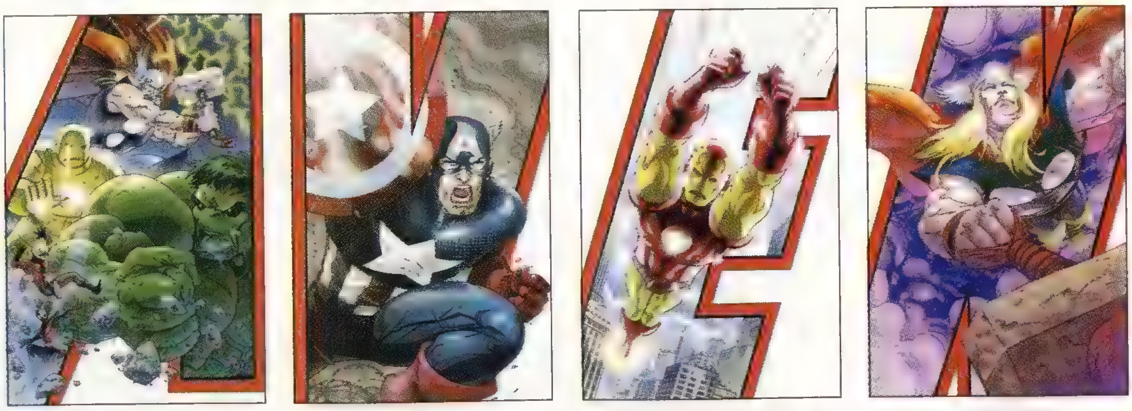
Currently unscheduled by Dark Horse, the as-yet untitled mini is being drawn by Jason (**Van Helsing**) Alexander.

MOONSTONE is collecting three year's worth of *The Phantom* Sunday newspaper strips by former **Batman** artist Graham Nolan in a 112-page trade paperback.

Graham Nolan Sundays reprints the four stories the artist drew between 2002 and 2004. Priced $13.95, the softcover ships in December.

DC's Focus imprint has had a shakey start. Its launch title **Hard Time** was a poor seller and now its second comic, **Kinetic**, is coming to a stop on October 27.

By Kelley Puckett and Warren Pleece, the title is being axed with issue #8. How the late shipping of #7 – delayed from September 22 to October 20 – will affect publication of the final issue is unknown.



Makeover for Marvel A-team

***Daredevil** writer and former Top Cow artist create new start for Avengers while **Wildcats Version 3.0** author and ex-**Flash** penciller take fresh look at early days of "Earth's Mightiest Heroes"*

BRIAN Michael Bendis is writing a 48-page one-shot that not only wraps up his *Avengers Disassembled* storyline but also leaves the way open for the emergence of a new incarnation of the Marvel superteam.

Shipping on November 3, the aptly titled **Avengers Finale** is drawn by David (**Aphrodite IX**) Finch with help from former **Avengers** artists including George Pérez and Steve Epting. A $3.50 comic, it leads into the first issue of **New Avengers**, following three weeks later.

Befitting the relaunch, the first $2.25 issue of the new series introduces a much-changed Avengers roster. With Captain America in charge, it includes an Iron Man – who may or may not be Tony Stark – as well as Spider-Man and Wolverine.

Oldest superhero

The other members of the new team are Jessica Drew – the original Spider-Woman in her old costume, Luke Cage and the Sentry, the character that Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee introduced as Marvel's oldest superhero in his own 2000 five-parter.

Also written by Bendis, **New Avengers** is illustrated by Finch, who worked with the **Daredevil** writer on *Avengers Disassembled.*

As an Avengers era ends on November 3, Joe Casey is to begin his exploration of the early days of the team.

In collaboration with Scott Kolins – who is also pencilling the new **Marvel Team-Up** title that launches on the same day – the former **Adventures of Superman** writer is working on the $3.50 **Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes**.

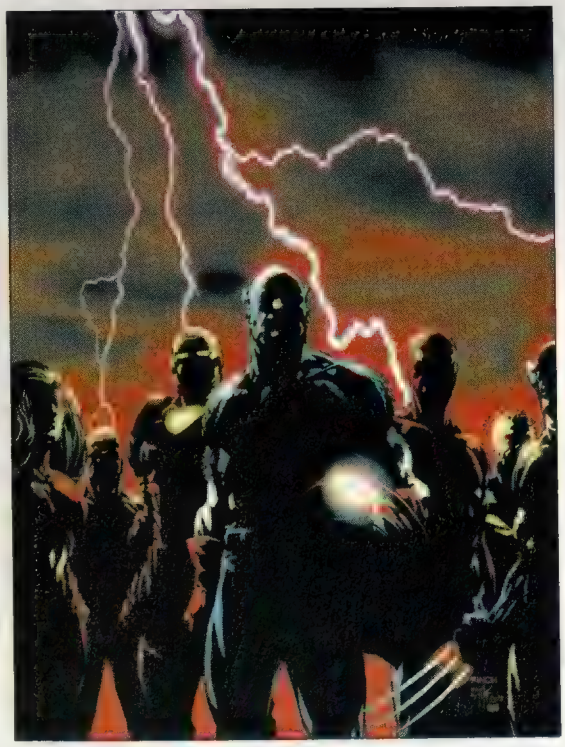
Asked what period the eight-parter covered, Casey, who admits to being a life-long fan of the Marvel team, told **CI**, "Roughly, **EMH** covers the first 16 issues of the original series, from the team's inception to its historical first line-up change.

"This is not a strict retelling," the writer stressed, "although fans who are familiar with the original stories will see from where we take our cues in **EMH**. But the main thrust of the series is a deeper examination of the characters than Lee, Kirby and Heck afforded us back in the day.

"For me," he added, "the **Avengers** was all about the relationships so we're going to take some time and see exactly how some of those relationships formed."

When it was suggested that potential readers may consider they had 'seen it all before,' that the mini was simply a rehash of those first 16 issues of **Avengers**, the writer responded, "I think, in the wake of what's going on in the monthly title right now, a lot of long-term readers will be looking for a dose of their favourite, classic **Avengers** characters and **EMH** is the only place they are going to get that."

Continuing, he added defensively, "As for the 'rehash' question... anyone who read **X-Men: Children of the Atom** knows that when I tackle a historical series like this, I go all out not to rehash anything. If I didn't think I couldn't bring something new to the party, I wouldn't have considered taking the gig."



*Above: Cover art for **New Avengers #1**; by David Finch, one of the hot artists designated a Young Gun by Marvel editor-in-chief Joe Quesada. Top from left to right: Scott Kolins art for the covers to the first four issues of the biweekly **Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes**.*

Moving on to the series' theme, Casey – who also has **The Intimates**, a superhero title co-created with Jim Lee in the pipeline – said, "For me, **EMH** is about disparate, even unlikely characters forming tight bonds as they work toward a common goal."

Diehard fans

"I don't think any of these heroes realised at the outset exactly what the Avengers would mean to them," he conjectured. "But they all know by the end. It's about friendship and camaraderie when the stakes are at their absolute highest."

Summarising his thoughts about **Earth's Mightiest Heroes**, Casey, who said it was the characters that interested him, concluded, "Basically, it's written for the diehards by a diehard."

● As part of its Avengers revamp, Marvel is also to relaunch **Captain America**, **Iron Man** and **Thor**.

It has drafted in **Gotham Central**'s Ed Brubaker and **El Cazador** artist Steve Epting to handle the Star-Spangled Avenger while **The Authority**'s Warren Ellis and Adi Granov become Shellhead's regular creative team. Marvel has yet to announce any details of the Thunder God's new title.

The 48-page **Iron Man** #1 ships on November 10. The first $2.99 issue of **Captain America** follows a week later.

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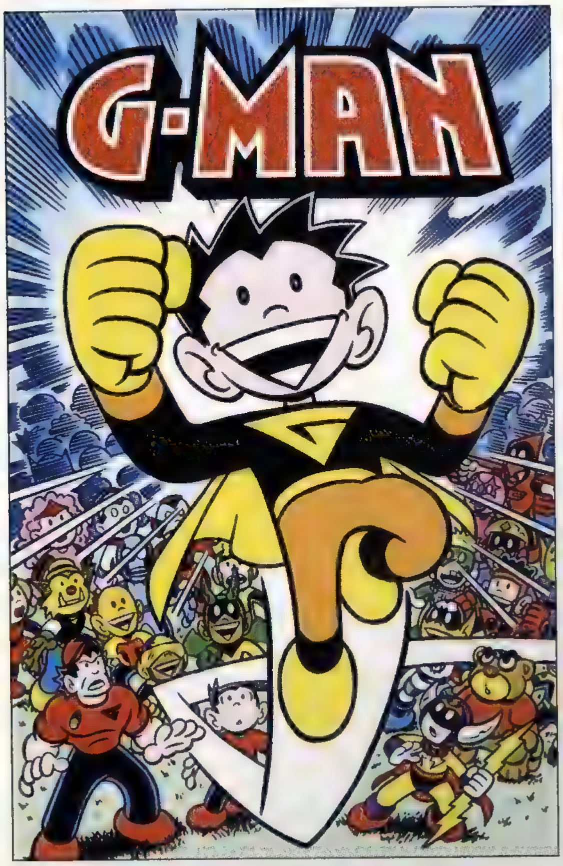


THE CARTOONIST behind Marvel's Bullpen Bits *and* **Mini Marvels** *is to introduce his own kid superheroes in a 64-page Image one-shot. Chris Giarrusso's* **G-Man** *includes a new 34-page story in which he reveals the origin of his little hero. The $5.95 special also contains a collection of the writer/artist's* **Savage Dragon** *backup strip,* Comic Bits. *It ships on December 12.*

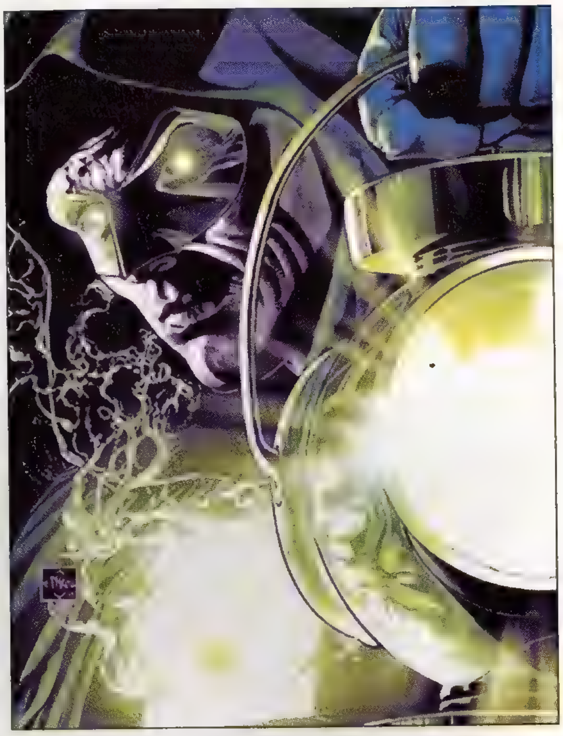
Silver Age DC hero returns from dead

IN COMICS, the old adage is that death is merely temporary. Unless you're Bucky, Gwen Stacy or Uncle Ben. Until now, it looked like Hal Jordan was to be another exception to the rule.

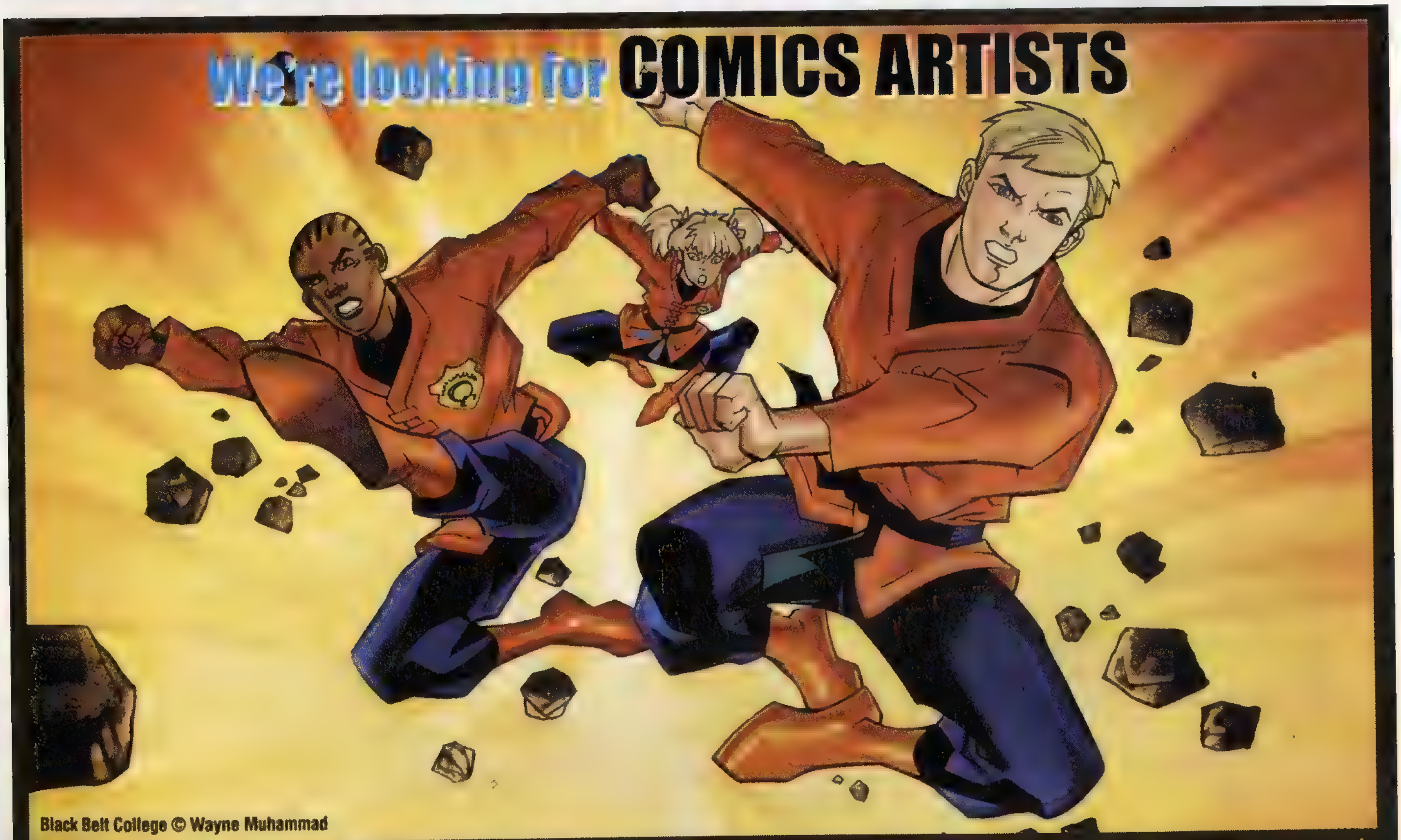
In death, the Silver Age Green Lantern inherited the mantle of the Spectre. Thus able to pursue his heroic endeavours from the other side, there seemed no chance of resurrection. But that has all changed.

With the recent axing of the current **Green Lantern** title – which starred Kyle Rayner, his replacement – the path is clear for Jordan to rejoin the living in the DC Universe. This he does courtesy of **The Flash: Iron Heights** team of writer Geoff (**JSA**) Johns and artist Ethan Van Sciver.

Appropriately, the pair bring Jordan back in **Rebirth**, a Green Lantern six-parter that restores him to his original heroic status and opens a new chapter for him and his power ring-wielding comrades.



Above: Ethan Van Sciver's cover art to the 40-page **Green Lantern: Rebirth** *#1. The $2.95 DC six-parter launches on October 27.*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UK's latest debuts with SF classic

Mongoose adds graphic novel trilogy to its well-established role-playing game line

ALTHOUGH it already has such properties as Babylon 5, Conan and Judge Dredd in its role-playing games line, the acquisition of the **Starship Troopers** licence has prompted Mongoose Publishing's expansion into comics.

Plenty of bugs

The Swindon-based RPG producer is to release its maiden graphic novel in November. The first book in a trilogy based on Robert Heinlein's classic SF novel, **Alamo Bay** is drawn by newcomer Sam Hart.

The Brazilian artist told **CI** he was attracted to the project having enjoyed the 1997 Paul Verhoeven movie based on the 1959 novel.

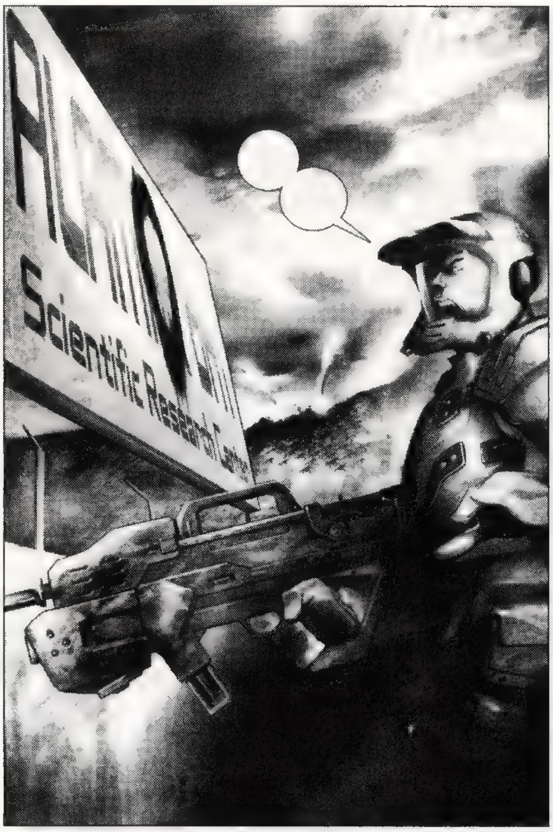
"The book is proving great fun to draw, the script has it all: tension, humour, action, big spaceships, power suits, marauder suits, drop suits, alien worlds and people going mad. Oh yeah, and plenty of bugs too."

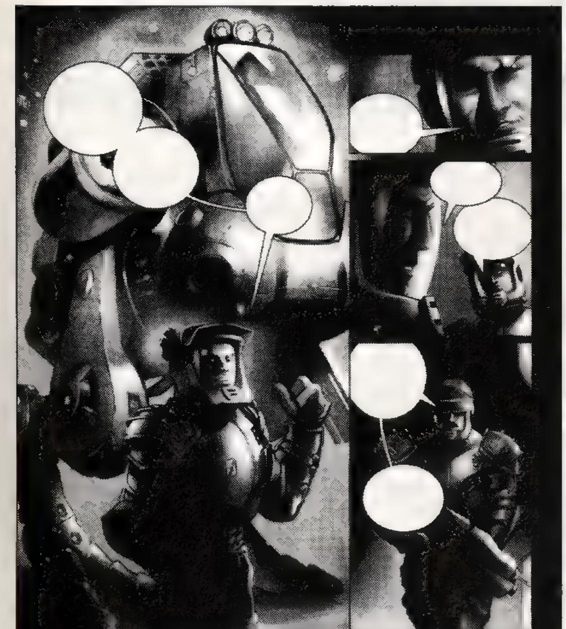
As for Lee, the writer told **CI**, "The trilogy was actually Mongoose's idea – they wanted a trilogy of books to complement their new ***Starship Troopers*** game and had pitched out to various comic writers asking for suggestions. I pitched a trilogy idea rather than a standalone and after a couple of tweaks, blackmail attempts and letters made out of newspaper letters managed to bag all three books."

Strength of spirit

Lee's trilogy is entitled **Blaze of Glory**. It continues next January in **Deadman's Hand**, drawn by Jim Brady, before concluding two months later in **Damaged Justice**. The final chapter is illustrated by Paul Ridgon, who designed the look of the series before having to bow out of drawing Book One.

Lee said that, while the overriding theme of **Blaze of Glory** was the strength of spirit, "**Alamo Bay** is about the loss of innocence, **Dead Man's Hand** is very much about living with choices and how they affect your situation and **Damaged Justice** is about redemption."





Pictured: Interior pages from **Alamo Bay**, the first book in Mongoose Publishing's ***Starship Troopers*** graphic novel trilogy, ***Blaze of Glory***; art by Sam Hart, digital grayscale painting by Rod Reis.

When asked whether his story was shaped purely by the source novel or if the *Starship Troopers* movie had been any influence, Lee's response was unexpected. "Actually we're not really using either. The basic canon for this series is the CGI TV series *Roughnecks* that came out a couple of years back."

Bug kill fest

"It's not quite the novel but has more similarities to the book than the movie has," he explained. "We have marines making 'drops' as per the book but their power suits are substantially reduced from the novel. That said, it isn't the 'flack jacket and helmet' of the film.

"We take a lot of the philosophy of the book – these aren't just 'bug kill fest' stories but you can't have a book full of talking heads and politics that's set in such a world so we mix and match," added Lee, who includes a contribution to **Unlimited X-Men** among his credits.

"The high concept for the trilogy is very much Bernard Cornwell's Sharpe in space," advised Lee. "It's the rise, fall and return of a trooper, Will Tanner as he fights bugs, corruption, and his M.I [Mobile Infantry] nemesis, Sergeant Lock.

"The first novel, **Alamo Bay** is more a standalone tale – it's an origin story that assumes that the reader has a working knowledge of the world of **Starship Troopers**. It follows a new Mobile Infantry troop to a research base that's under siege by the bugs," the writer explained.

Dark comedy

"Basically," he continued, "a Sky Marshal's son is there and it's very much a *Saving Private Ryan* mission but when the M.I. get to the base they find they have been misdirected as to the number of bugs and also about the actual reason for the base..."

Referring to the overall tone of the trilogy, Lee stated, "It's not a gore splattered gunfest, it's very character driven with actually a hint of dark comedy in the characters themselves. We play with a lot of the truths of the **Starship Troopers** world – Rico and Carmen and people like that. We also poke fun at countdown grenades and war movies.

"Hopefully," Lee added, "the mood is cinematic, and easy to go along with. By the end of the second book you should feel that you know everyone really well, just in time for the world to fall apart."

- Dark Horse published a 1997 adaptation of the *Starship Troopers* movie, which it followed with two mini-series and a one-shot.

Starship Troopers: Blaze of Glory *Book One –* ***Alamo Bay****, ships on November 30, priced $14.95.*

In Brief

JUSTICE League Elite*'s Doug Mahnke has extended his exclusive contract with DC by two years.*

The artist – who is to join incoming writer Judd Winick as regular penciller of ***Batman*** *with the December-shipping #635 – is also lined up to draw next year's* ***JLA/Cyberforce****. Likely to be a one-shot rather than a miniseries, the DC/Top Cow crossover is being written by Mahnke's* ***Justice League Elite*** *partner, Joe Kelly.*

IN A precedent-setting move, ADV is to serialise a new manga before it sees print in Japan.

Written and drawn by D.N.Angel's Yukiri Sugisaki, Lagoon Engine Einsatz begins in the October-shipping ***Newtype USA*** *volume 3 #10.*

X-MEN: Children of the Atom *artist Steve Rude is currently finalising the contract for Dark Horse to reprint* ***Nexus****, the series he co-created with writer Mike Baron for Capitol Comics in 1981.*

FOLLOWING its repackaging of ***I am Legend****, Steve Niles and Elman Brown's 1988 Eclipse four-parter, IDW has a second adaptation of a Richard Matheson novel in the works.*

A 48-page one-shot, ***Legend of Hell House*** *is by two British creators:* ***Batman/Aliens 2*** *writer Ian Edginton and* ***2000 AD****'s Nikolai Dante artist Simon Fraser. The black and white comic ships in December, priced $6.49.*

MIKE Kiley has been appointed editor-in-chief by Tokyopop.

One of the Los Angeles-based publisher's founders, Kiley is considered a pioneer for the work he has done since the early 1990s in bringing manga and anime to a US audience. He has been overseeing the development of the company's website but will now be responsible for broadening Tokyopop's publishing programme to create a larger diversity of original and licensed manga, as well as new book-related consumer goods.

CI *columnist Chris (Comics Webworld) Bunting has been appointed editor-in-chief by St Albans-based AP Comics.*

TOKYOPOP is to publish ***The Tarot Cafe****, a manwha about a tarot card reader who counsels supernatural beings.*

The Korean series, the work of ***Les Bijoux*** *creator Park Sang Sung, debuts next March.*

DC HAS removed the 128-page ***Milo Manara's Odysseys of Giuseppe Bergman*** *from its schedule.*

Originally due to ship on October 27, the $17.95 Humanoids graphic novel is to be resolicited at a later date.

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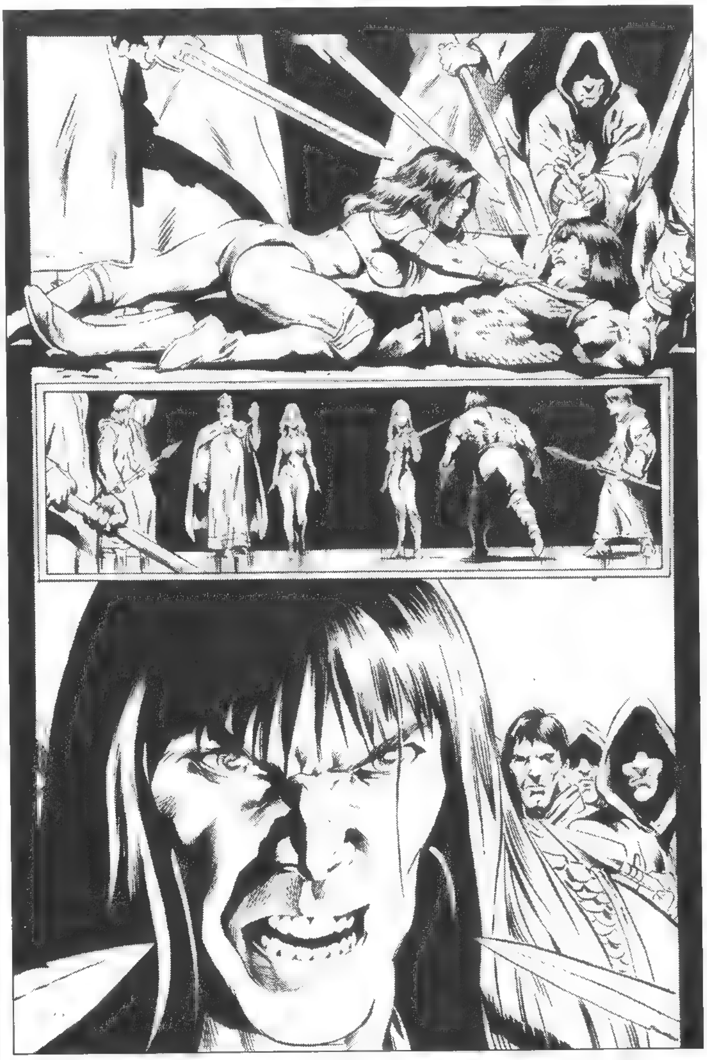

Dark Horse adds Conan one-shots

ROBERT E Howard's archetypal sword and sorcery hero has proven to be a solid hit for Dark Horse. Sales of Kurt Busiek and artist Cary Nord's interpretation of **Conan**, which kicked off at 51,416 copies, have fallen only 8.5% by issue #7.

With sales of **The Chronicles of Conan** trade paperback series – which reprints Marvel's 1970s title **Conan the Barbarian** – also remaining strong, the Oregon-based publisher is to expand the franchise with a series of **Conan** one-shots, each by a different creative team.

Drink, sex and death

First up is **The Daughters of Midora**. A 48-pager, it is written by **Monolith**'s Jimmy Palmiotti and illustrated by Mark (**Ghost Rider**) Texeira, who recently premiered his creator-owned **Pscythe** at Image.

Speaking to **CI** about the project, Palmiotti said, "This is the Conan that drinks, has sex and kills monsters… usually in that order.

"The story takes place in Nemedia, which is located south of the foothills of the border kingdom, in the holy city of Gouvia. King Midora has had one of his twin daughters kidnapped and enlists Conan, not of his own free will, to go find and bring back his daughter."

Zombie warriors

"Along the way Conan is joined by the other daughter and two of her top men and off they go on an adventure," added Palmiotti, who co-founded *Marvel Knights* with current Marvel editor-in-chief Joe Quesada. "I really don't want to talk too much about it but I can say there is a lot of hand to hand combat, sword play, flaming spears, zombie warriors and giant monsters and scantily clad warrior women."

Regarding Texeira's involvement, Palmiotti, an artist himself, stated, "I know what Mark likes to illustrate and I know what he does best. Battle scenes and stunning women is when we get the best effort out of him."

● Reportedly the next one-shot is to be written by **Conan the Barbarian** supremo, Roy Thomas.

***Conan and the Daughters of Midora**, priced $4.99, ships on October 6.*

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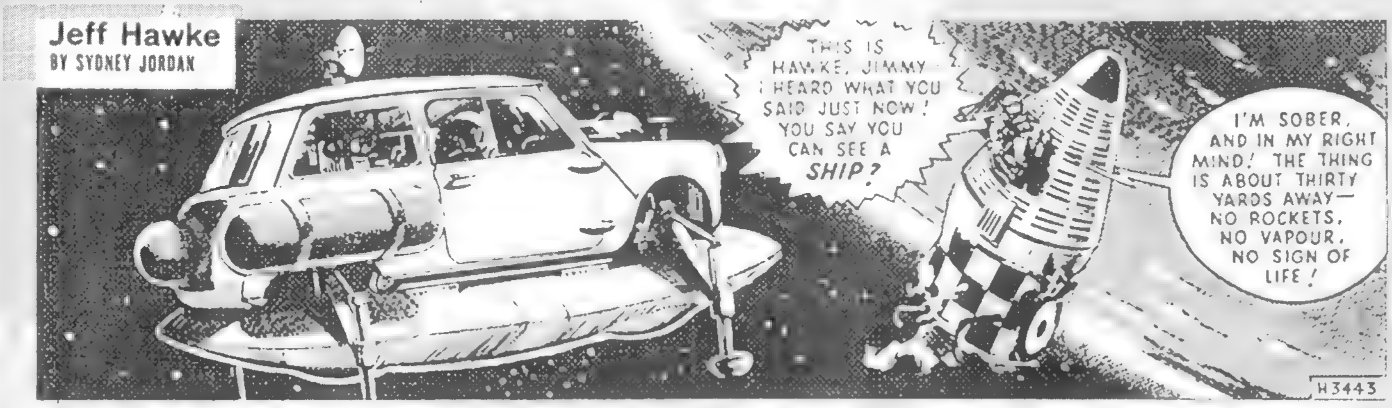
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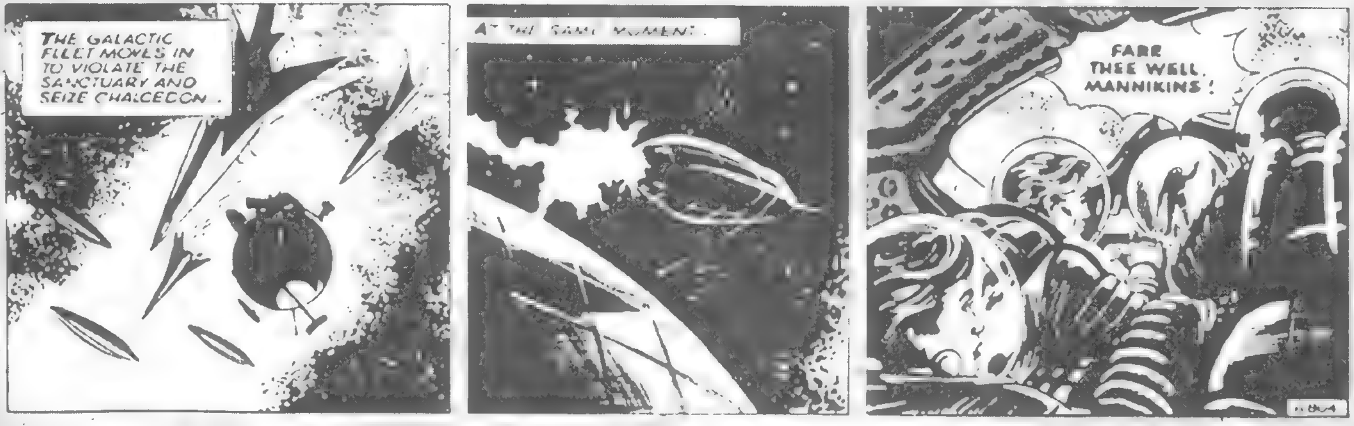
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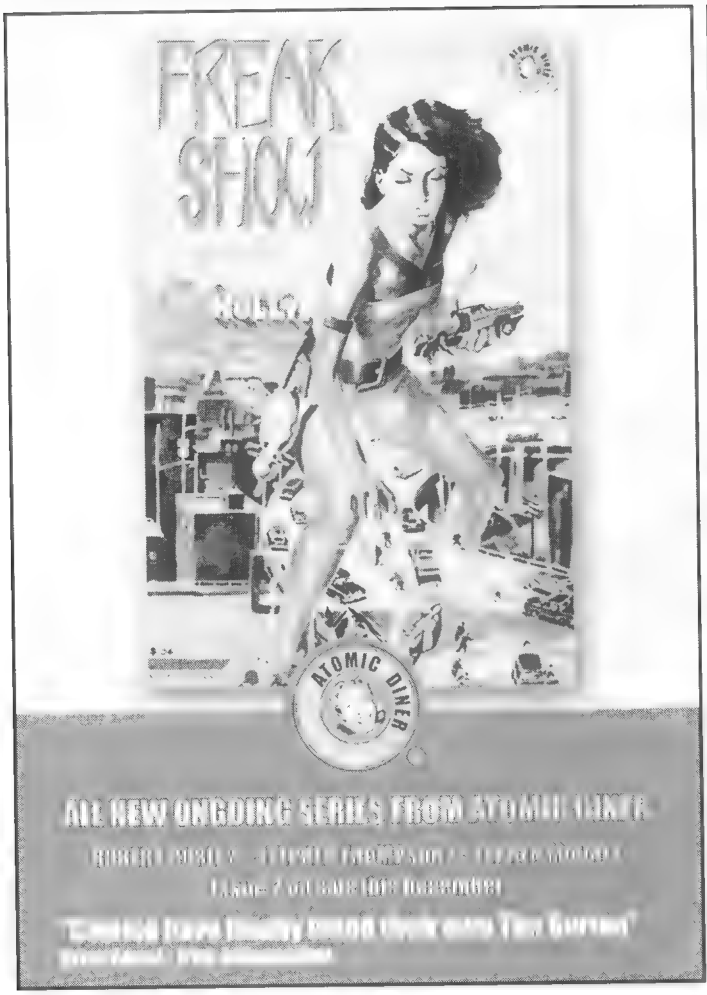
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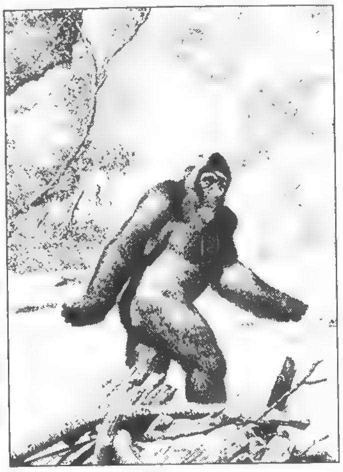
Niles, Zombie and Corben join forces

UNDER the banner of Creep Entertainment International their horror-themed production company – current horrormeister Steve Niles and former White Zombie front man Rob Zombie have already produced **The Nail** for Dark Horse.

With their tale of a satanic band **Lords of Salem**, a combination comics/music project still in development, the two writers are turning their attention to a series about one of America's legendary monsters.



*Richard Corben's promo art for IDW's **Bigfoot** four-parter is based on an iconic scene filmed by Roger Patterson, a former rodeo rider and author of **Do Abominable Snowmen of America Really Exist?** [1966]. Together with Bob Gimlin, Patterson produced an infamous 1967 documentary that many consider definitive proof that there really is a seven-foot apelike creature – also known as Sasquatch – living in the wilds of America's Pacific Northwest.*

In partnership with underground comix legend Richard Corben, they are working on **Bigfoot**.

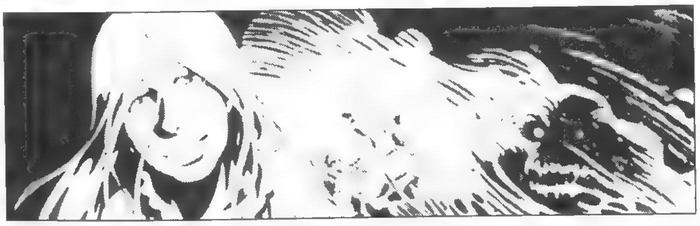
Set for early 2005 release, the IDW four-parter tells what it would be like if a huge, hairy creature really was stomping around the Pacific Northwest. In the series, Bigfoot exists and he's not happy with mankind.

"No matter what anyone says I'm still convinced that Bigfoot is 100 percent real," claimed Zombie. "This comic is the first step in proving that a giant apeman is still haunting the woodlands of America."

Bigfoot's love child

Speaking exclusively to **CI** about the series, Corben said he has always been a monster and horror fan and only started in comics because Warren was publishing **Creepy**, **Eerie** and **Vampirella**.

He added that he had done a great deal of research on the creature also known as Sasquatch including reading up on Bigfoot sightings and viewing the Patterson movie *[see left]*. "Of course the most outstanding item was a newspaper tabloid headline I saw while waiting in line for my groceries: *Woman Held Prisoner Two Years by Bigfoot now is Pregnant with its Love Child*. I wonder how I can work that into the story?"



West gets Wicked

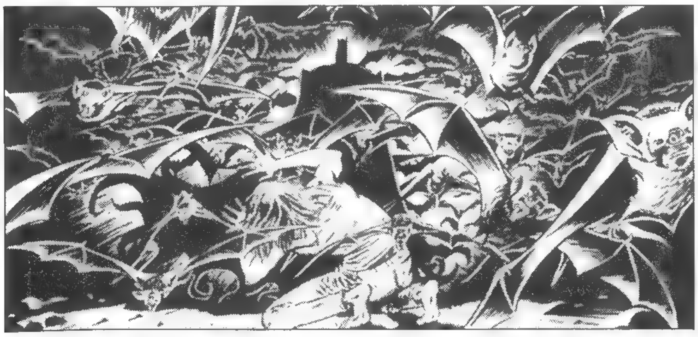
THE CREATORS of **The Black Forest** are reuniting for a second Image graphic novel, one combining two genres.

Written by Todd Livingston and Robert Tinnell, **The Wicked West** is drawn by Neil Vokes. A 96-pager, it is a western with a horror theme.

Asked to describe the comic, Vokes told **CI**, "Bob always answers that with the catchphrase of 'What if the outlaw Josey Wales rode into Salem's Lot?' and that's as good a basic description as any. A man called Cotton Coleridge is wandering alone through the old west trying to resolve a tragic incident in his past which has taken away everything he cherished in his life and left him with a very real curse.

"Through the years he's had to leave behind the peaceful man he was and become a killer," the artist explained. "In this particular story he hopes to settle in a small Texas town for a spell as their schoolteacher but his curse is still very present and ultimately brings about the resurrection of an evil creature that intends to bleed the town dry. Our drama moves from there into some interesting areas I'd rather not go into detail about. I'll let the readers discover what that is themselves."

***The Wicked West**, priced $9.95, ships on October 13.*



STRAY Bullets *creator David Lapham is temporarily abandoning his highly-acclaimed crime series to write and layout a 12-issue run on* **Detective Comics**. *The one-time Valiant artist's City of Crime storyline begins in issue #801, which ships on December 1. Shown above is art from the serial, which is pencilled by* **Batman: The 12-cent Adventures**' *Ramon Bachs and inked by* **Detective Comics** *regular Nathan Massengill.*

French project for English artist

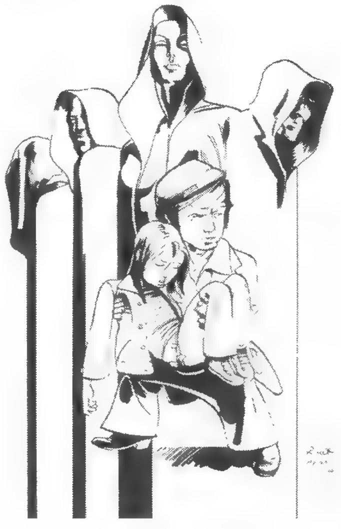
HE MAY be virtually unknown in his own country but Roger Mason is currently drawing his second graphic novel for the French market.

The English artist is now working on **Une Affaire Des Sorciers** for EP Editions. It is written by Laurent-Frederick Bollée, who has adapted George Chesbro's 1979 novel, **An Affair of Sorcerers**.

Mason told **CI** that **Une Affaire** features Mongo the Magnificent. The dwarf private investigator, who is apparently quite well-known in France, is called upon to investigate a coven of sorcerers who have begun to murder people.

"I wanted to do this book because I enjoyed reading the novel, and the fact that this would be my first full-colour bande dessinée printed in France, thus being a higher profile than **London Inferno** - my previous collaboration with Bollée for EP – which was in black and white."

Asked what was the biggest challenge he faced in producing the October-shipping graphic novel, Mason replied, "Because the hero is a dwarf there were problems in making him look imposing on the page. I tried hard to come up with ways to trick the reader into thinking Mongo is taller than he is. I tilted the angle in his favour and fiddled with perspective, hopefully with some success."



CI #175 competition winners

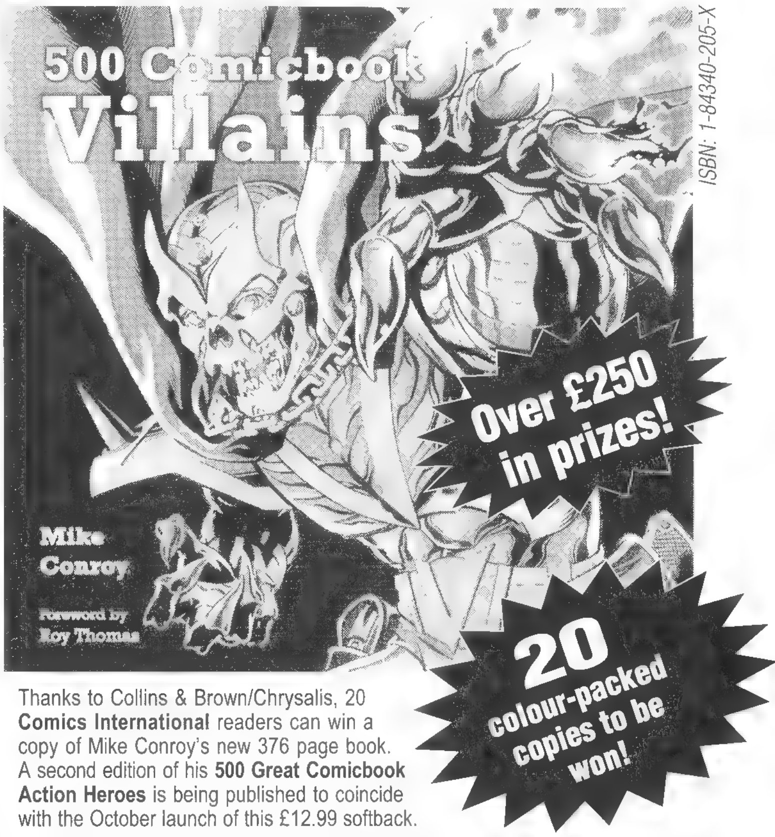
IN ***CI*** *#175, 15 readers were offered the opportunity to each win a copy of Panini's collected edition of Neil Gaiman and Andy Kubert's Marvel eight-parter,* ***1602***. *The winners were:*

David Allmond, Oxford
Carlo Baranyai, Bradford
Sean Begley, Bray, Co Wicklow
Robert Blackmore, London NW3
Grayson Bowler, London E17
Philip Ebbrell, Great Bookham
Neil Jackson, London NW10
Tony Miles, Leighton Buzzard
Michael Naylor, Bradford
Glenn Preedy, Redcar
Matthew Rees, Kingston-on-Thames
A Roderick, Tycroes, Ammanford
Mrs J Skinner, Hucknall
Lyndon Thomas, Pyle, Near Bridgend
Mark Tustin, Smethwick

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of the issue as:

1 News International (18.5%)
2 Reviews (12.8%)
3 Talking Shop (8.5%)
4 NetWorks (7.6%)
5 Comment (7.2%)
6 Sez Dez (6.6%)
7 Frame To Frame (5.8%)
8 In the Gutter (5.5%)
9 Letters/Comic Cuts (5.0%)
10 Q and A (4.5%)

The highest scoring section as the least popular feature was "None, they're all fine" at 26.8%, with Talking Shop not only scoring its highest ever at third favourite (above), but also being the most unpopular section with 16.1% negative votes. Novel Graphics followed with 10.7%.



Thanks to Collins & Brown/Chrysalis, 20 **Comics International** readers can win a copy of Mike Conroy's new 376 page book. A second edition of his **500 Great Comicbook Action Heroes** is being published to coincide with the October launch of this £12.99 softback.

To enter,simply choose the correct answer to the following question:

Which of the following villains did not first appear in comics?

a) Doctor Doom
b) Ming the Merciless
c) Darth Vader

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Please also complete the following:
My five favourite features this issue are (please mark in order as *1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th* – no ticks):

___ NEWS INTERNATIONAL
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___ FRAME TO FRAME
___ REVIEWS
___ BIFF'S ILLUMINATIONS
___ ADVANCE LISTINGS
___ COMICS ECONOMICS
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___ Q AND A
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___ COMPETITION
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PLUS... which of the above is your LEAST favourite, the one you skipped reading, the one you wish we'd replace with a new contender for the top spot:

____

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Stan Lee's playboy by day, superhero by night is not who you might think he is

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Charting the latest news between films and comics

"POOR old Stan," was how one colleague responded when he first heard news of Stan Lee's latest project. It pretty much encapsulates the general feeling that greets each announcement from the octogenarian co-creator of the Marvel Universe these days. It's a heartfelt reaction to the lack of innovation if not the feeling of desperation that surrounds every aspect of his output.

"Get out while the going's good." "Always leave them wanting more." These and other such adages are all being ignored by Lee as he struggles to re-ignite the creative spark he had in the 1960s.

Maybe he's missing the stimulus Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko supplied. Maybe he's past it. Or maybe, in his twilight years, he's being pushed by investors; those who dream of the riches Stan the Man could bestow on them if only he could catch lightning in a bottle a second time.

Stan Lee crash?

Whatever the facts of the matter, his most recent attempts to write comics – 2002's **Just Imagine Stan Lee...** titles for DC – were an embarrassment to read and as for his first post-Marvel enterprise, Stan Lee Media crashed spectacularly leaving nothing memorable behind.

Then came *Stripperella*, an 'adult' cartoon with the superheroine of the title based on and voiced by Pamela Anderson. It was to be a tentpole series on the Spike TV network but plagued by problems, it took almost a year to broadcast all 12 of its first – and so far only – season episodes.

And whatever happened to *Who wants to be a Superhero?*, the reality TV series Lee was developing under his Pow! Entertainment shingle? It's been in development for over a year now. Maybe not enough people want to create a superhero in the hope of winning their character a starring role in his/her own comicbook.

Hef's Angels

Or maybe it's just not particularly good television... It sounds like the mainstream equivalent of televising the Script Pitching Sessions that Kev Sutherland organises for his London Comic Festivals.

So, in the two years since Pow! was set up, Lee's output has been just one spectacularly unsuccessful cartoon series. Now, with the assistance of someone who knows that sex sells, he's taking a second stab at the animated market.

Lee is teaming up with Hugh Hefner on a project that is to make the **Playboy** founder/editor-in-chief the star of his own cartoon show. To be produced by Pow! and **Playboy**'s Alta Loma Entertainment, *Hef's Superbunnies* features the 78-year old leading his teams of specially trained (in what one wonders) Superbunnies to fight injustice.

"It is time to reveal my secret identity. You all know me as Editor-in-Chief of *Playboy* but late at night when everybody assumes I am in the grotto living the good life, I'm out there with the Superbunnies fighting evildoers," was Hefner's tongue-in-cheek contribution to the announcement of the project.

Superbunnies is being lined up to premiere next year on MTV. Who knows, it might live up to expectations... and you can take that any way you want.

Before then Lee's got **Alexa**, a graphic novel about a superheroine, coming from Byron Preiss's ibooks in February. It's likely that many an aging fanboy will buy it hoping for, if not a return to greatness, at least a glimpse of past glories.

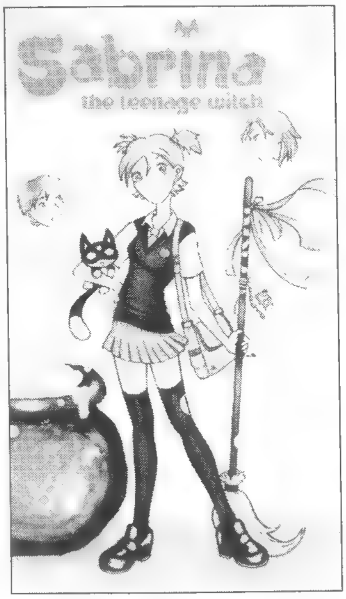
Maybe this time they won't be disappointed. Maybe.

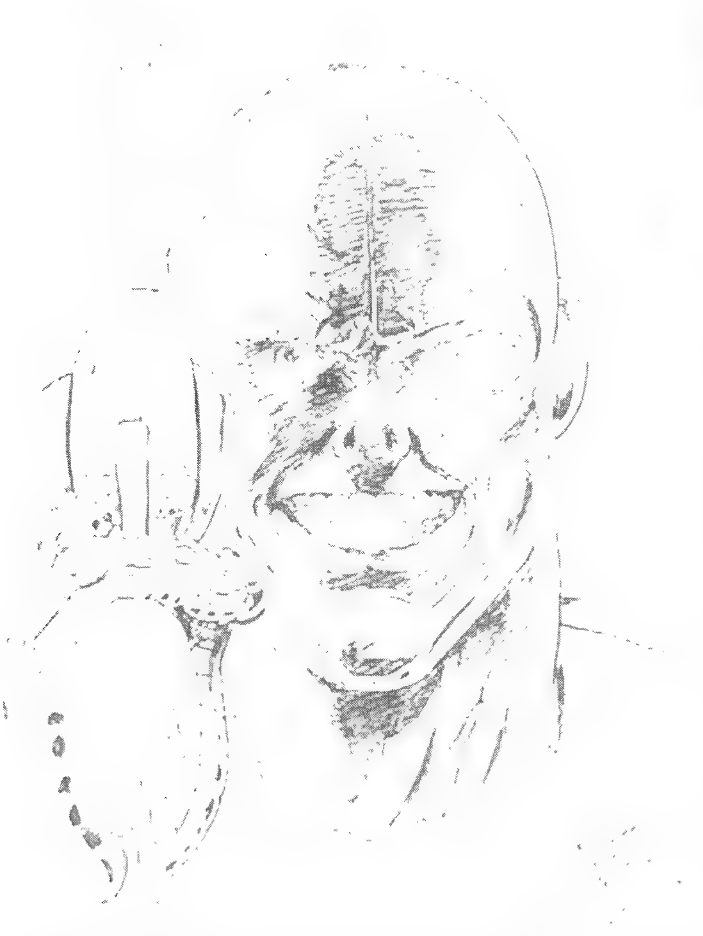
Archie's witch

And speaking of female comicbook characters... it looks like Sabrina is coming back again.

In 2003, after seven successful seasons as the star of the TV sitcom, which spawned an animated spin-off – the third to feature the teenage witch – Melissa Joan Hart bowed out of the role that she had made hers since 1996. But while the now 28-year-old may be too long in the tooth to portray Sabrina ("the teenage witch"), Archie Comics obviously believes there's mileage to be had out of a character who became something of a TV icon to young girls.

Despite the abject failure of its 2001 shot at a big screen box office bonanza (otherwise known as *Josie and the Pussycats*), the comics publisher is teaming up with Paramount





Above: Rich Buckler's unpublished sketch of the original Deathlok. Left: **Playboy** founder Hugh Hefner and a bevy of the magazine's bunnies. Below: A manga-style version of Archie's teenage witch from the cover to **Sabrina** #59; art by Tania Del Rio.

to produce a *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* feature.

Archie president Allan Grafman is intending for the new *Sabrina* to have an appeal beyond the teenage witch's usual core audience. "While the movie will be empowering for girls, it is going to have the action and science fiction/fantasy that appeals to boys."

We shall see. If all else fails, Archie can always fall back on *Betty and Veronica*. Another live action flick aimed at young teenage girls, this spin-off from the **Archie** - as in Andrews, the perennial teenager – line of humour comics is being co-produced with Miramax.

Road to Deathlok

Although *Die Another Day* director Lee Tamahori has recently exited the planned big-screen outing for Deathlok, Paramount/Marvel Studios has made a very intriguing move in the wake of his departure.

They have brought in David Self to rewrite the story of the futuristic cyborg. He brings a whole new outlook to the enterprise.

Self has been involved in a previous comics-to-movie project but not just any old one – he wrote Sam Mendes' much acclaimed adaptation of Max Allan Collins and Richard Piers Rayner's **Road to Perdition**. And an excellent job he did of it, too.

If he can bring the same level of craft to *Deathlok*, it's conceivable the movie could end up as something more than a run-of-the-mill science fiction action flick about a human/robot composite on the run.

X-Men 3 director

The directorial hole left by Bryan Singer's decision to direct *Believable* – the tentatively titled and still stuck in development next *Superman* movie – rather than the third *X-Men* flick looks to have been plugged by someone with strong and current connections to Marvel's mutants.

Word is that 20th Century Fox has tagged **Astonishing X-Men** writer and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* creator Joss Whedon to direct *X3*. He is currently finishing off *Serenity*, the movie spin-off from his short-lived *Firefly* TV series.

X3 is currently without a script but Whedon, who contributed to the first *X-Men* movie, is no stranger to scripting for an ensemble cast. Maybe he'll take on a dual role - it would certainly make the fans happy.

Although none of the cast has yet been signed up, shooting is currently scheduled to begin next June. Will that leave Whedon with enough time to put a screenplay together?

It's certainly not an impossible task but, with all his other commitments, Whedon might chose to leave the scripting to someone else.

Whatever, he's a good replacement for Singer, even if his vision is likely to prove somewhat different.

Frame to Frame Review

del Toro delivers Mignola's Hellboy

AS HE proved with 2002's *Blade II*, Guillermo del Toro can make a good comicbook-based action-horror movie but **Hellboy** fans will be looking for something more from his bid to bring Mike Mignola's creation to the screen.

This time the Mexican-born director isn't working with an all-but unknown Marvel character, one that another film maker had already introduced to cinema audiences. Instead he's got the unenviable task of trying to translate Mignola's unique vision into movie terms.

That del Toro brings it off is a credit not only to his directorial ability – and the talents of cinematographer Guillermo Navarro – but also to his willingness to work closely with Hellboy's creator on the project. His use of harsh lighting closely replicates Mignola's idiosyncratic chiaroscuro look with the opening sequence in particular resembling scenes the writer/artist – who served as design consultant on the film – might have directed.

Paranormal Defense

Based loosely around Mignola's initial **Hellboy** mini-series – 1994's **Seed of Destruction** [Dark Horse] – the movie is an origin story. It not only introduces the titular hero but also such other Bureau of Paranormal Defense regulars as Abe Sapien, Liz Sherman and Professor Trevor Bruttenholm, the man Hellboy calls Father.

As Bruttenholm – pronounced Broom – John Hurt is on top form. He is ably assisted by David Hyde-White as the voice of the merman, Abe, and by Rubert Evans as the BPRD's latest recruit, FBI agent John Myers. Selma Blair also does a sterling job as Liz, the firestarter, and makes it easy to believe that she could fall in love with Hellboy.

Above: Ron Perlman as Hellboy offers a talking corpse a lift.

Even the bad guys are good... particularly head villain Grigori Rasputin as played by Karel Roden and Ladislav Beran as the monstrous Karl Ruprect Kroenen.

Perlman steals show

But it is the movie's star, Ron Perlman (not Perelman – that's the guy who almost destroyed Marvel), who makes the film work. He steals the show. He *is* Hellboy. He makes you believe a cigar-smoking, gun-toting cat-loving cantankerous seven-foot horned red demon really exists.

It's no wonder del Toro and Mignola both wanted him for the role. He's perfect... It's a pity Ang Lee couldn't have got as close a representation with *Hulk* but he chose

continues overleaf

Above: The eponymous hero (Ron Perlman) battles Brian Steele – an actor who's made a living out of playing screen creatures in movies such Underworld, Men in Black II and Monkeybone – as the near-invincible Sammael in a scene from **Hellboy**.

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to go the CGI route instead.

And speaking of special effects, there are no real complaints on that score. Despite a couple of little glitches, overall *Hellboy* works on every level.

It's no cinematic masterpiece but *Hellboy*'s certainly up there with the best comicbook movies.

Sky Captain flies

If *Hellboy*'s in the running for best comicbook movie then *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*'s also a contender but in the 'didn't actually come from a comic' category.

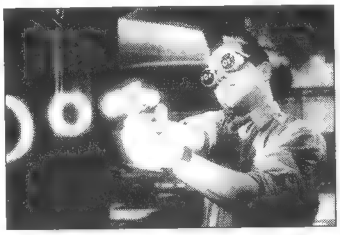
While comparing it with such other front runners in that class as *Unbreakable* and *The Fifth Element* is a bit like trying to compare chalk and cheese and – er – something else, it's a flick comicbook fans shouldn't miss. It's a delight.

Sky Captain is a blatant homage to the old Republic and Columbia cliffhangers. Filmed with a sepia tone, it perfectly captures the 1940s feel first time director/writer Kerry Conran is trying to replicate.

With a world-menacing mad scientist – played by the late Sir Lawrence Olivier, resurrected courtesy of old footage and the voice of another knight, Sir Anthony Hopkins – as its villain, it is replete with giant robots, enormous futuristic machinery and armadas of incredible flying machines and the kind of derring-do movie heroes of that era seem to have kept to themselves.

But despite all Conran's nostalgic touches, *Sky Captain* is a very much a 21st century flick. Nothing but the actors and items they interact with actually exists; everything else was computer-generated and the results are awesome. Some of the sets are breathtaking in their magnitude.

Even so, unlike *Star Wars*' George Lucas, Conran has not forgotten cinema is primarily a storytelling medium. *Sky Captain* is a fun romp. Even if the story has some gaping plot holes, it never fails to entertain.



Above: Don't say that's not a Buck Rogers raygun. Sky Captain's assistant, Dex Dearborn (Giovanni Ribisi) tries out his latest invention.

Above: Move over Blackhawk... Dressed more like Paddy Payne, Jude Law as Joe Sullivan otherwise known as Sky Captain. Top: Angelina Jolie plays a British and female version of Nick Fury. As Captain Francesca 'Frankie' Cook, she comes complete with eye-patch and an earlier version of the S.H.I.E.L.D. heli-carrier.

And while major comic fan Jude Law fails – but not by much – to set the screen alight as a hero based on Claire Chenault, who led the pre-World War II team of pilot mercenaries the Flying Tigers, kudos most go to Gwyneth Paltrow. There may be no chemistry between the two leads but she does a great job of capturing the essence of a 1940s movie actress for her role as reporter Polly Perkins; Lois Lane to Law's – er – Blackhawk.

If there's a flaw in *Sky Captain* it might be that younger audiences could be left cold by Conran's loving recreation of those old serials.

Obvious inspirations

From giant robots straight out of a 1940s Max Fleischer *Superman* cartoon to **Buck Rogers** comicbooks used as set dressing and a muttered "Shazam!"; and from scenes referencing such movies as *King Kong* and *The Wizard of Oz*, *Sky Captain* is full of affectionate tributes to the material that has so obviously inspired its 37-year-old director/writer.

In many ways it's more old-fashioned than either *Star Wars* or *Indiana Jones*, two other movies that exhibit a heavy and obvious cliffhanger influence and it's doubtful that *Sky Captain* will ever reach the levels of acceptance those two franchises have achieved.

However, judging by the US box office for its opening weekend, Conran needn't worry that his movie won't a hit. Let's just hope it does well enough for a sequel.

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Compiled by Jim Hannah

The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

ON SALE FROM

NOV 3

Dark Horse

new **B.P.R.D. The Dead** 1 (of 5; Mike Mignola & John Arcudi + Guy Davis) Abe Sapien digs up more details of his origin, as the biggest secret in 10 years of Hellboy comics continues to unravel. $2.99

Hellsing Vol 5 (Kohta Hirano; tpbk) The emerging Millennium Project, an army of Nazi undead, is unleashed upon the world. What will surely ensue is a war of blood and nostalgia, with a coolly gothic style and increasingly frenetic pace. 208pg b&w .... $13.95.

Star Wars: Empire 27 *(General Skywalker* 2 of 2; Ron Marz & Adriana Melo + Michael Atiyeh) When a Rebel intel team gets pinned down by an unexpected Imperial patrol Luke receives an unexpected promotion to General. $2.99

DC Comics

one-shot **By the Numbers: The Road To Cao Bang** (Laurent Rullier & Stanislas; tpbk) Victor Levallois is entrusted with delivering a suitcase full of currency to the port of Marseilles. The suitcase is stolen and Victor finds himself bound for Saigon and a colonial war! Mature readers. 112pg $14.95

Detective Comics 800 (Andersen Gabrych + David Lapham & Pete Woods) Batman faces a dangerous Gotham City. With Killer Croc and the Mad Hatter on the loose, does the Dark Knight even stand a chance? 48pg $3.50

Fallen Angel 17 (Peter David & David Lopez + Fernando Blanco) In the aftermath of a vicious attack on the Fallen Angel, the people who control the shadows in Bete Noire must choose sides. Mature readers. $2.95

Hard Time 10 (Steve Gerber & Brian Hurtt) High family drama lands on Ethan Harrow's bunk as his cellmate's long-lost granddaughter hits State like a whirlwind. $2.50

one-shot **Human Target: Living in Amerika** (Peter Milligan & Cliff Chiang; *Vertigo;* tpbk) From the wages of sin and redemption in Boston; to the remnants of '60s radicalism in the mid-West; to a favour to a friend in Los Angeles, Christopher Chance comes face-to- shifting-face with the religion, politics, and anything-but-casual sex. Mature readers. 128pg $14.95

new **The Intimates** 1 (Joe Casey & various; *WildStorm)* Welcome to the Seminary, where teenagers learn how to be superheroes. But things aren't what they seem, given the dark secret the retired superhero faculty may be unaware of! $2.95

new **JLA: Classified** 1 (Grant Morrison & Ed McGuinness + Dexter Vines) The Ultra-Marines take the brunt of an assault by Gorilla Grodd's guerrilla-militia. But where's the JLA? Only Batman remains to sort out this mystery! $2.95

one-shot **Judge Dredd: Judgment Day** (Garth Ennis & various; tpbk) He is a nightmare that the Psi-Judges didn't predict, and that even Judge Dredd cannot prevent. If his vile plan succeeds, the world will never be the same again. His name is Sabbat, he has the power to raise the dead 160pg b&w $14.95

Justice League Unlimited 3 (Adam Beechen & Carlo Barberi + Walden Wong) The Atom learns of an alien invasion whose entrance to our dimension is in the League's Watchtower! $2.25

Looney Tunes 120 (Sholly Fisch & David Alvarez + Mike DeCarlo) Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck compete to gain the limelight once again. $2.25

MAD 448 (The Usual Gang of Idiots) Thanksgiving-themed chuckles, laughs, and guffaws 48pg $3.50

Majestic 4 (Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning + Karl Kerschl) Majestic just wants to get home but the Eradicator stands in his way And what of the Daemonite probe that followed Majestic to the DCU? $2.95

The Monolith 10 (Jimmy Palmiotti & Justin Gray + Phil Winslade) The streets of modern Manhattan will witness an epic battle 60 years in the making, pitting monster against monster with Alice and Tilt caught in the middle! $2.95

one-shot **Nikolai Dante: The Romanov Dynasty** (Robbie Morrison & various; tpbk) When chance leaves him working with the Tsar's beautiful daughter Jena, Dante discovers his heritage – bio-bonding with the alien Weapons Crest, which grants him astonishing abilities. Mature readers. 192pg b&w ... $19.95

new **The Question** 1 (of 6; Rick Veitch & Tommy Lee Edwards) Vic Sage is a TV journalist with an uncanny ability to break difficult stories, thanks in large part to his relentless crime-fighting campaign as the Question! But has the faceless vigilante's particular brand of harsh justice finally sent him off the deep end? $2.95

Road To Perdition 2: On the Road (Max Allan Collins & various; tpbk) A collection of three stories by Max Allan Collins set between the pages of the original Road To Perdition. b&w 296pg $14.95

one-shot **Superman: Secret Identity** (Kurt Busiek & Stuart Immonen, tpbk) *See Close-Up, below.*

new **Swan** Vol 1 (Ariyoshi Kyoko) Meet Hijiri Masumi, a 16-year old about to enter her first ballet contest. The competition is fierce, and there's no telling whether she'll win, or how far her training can take her. 200pg b&w $9.95

Toe Tags Featuring George Romero 2 (George Romero & Tommy Castillo + Rodney Ramos) Professor Hoffman is kidnapped by the US army and mortally wounded. Rather than saving himself, he strives to keep his undead assistant Damien 'alive'. Mature readers. $2.95

Tom Strong Vol 4 (various; *America's Best Comics;* hbk) Collects issues #20-25 of the acclaimed series! This volume begins with the 3-part story *Meet Tom Stone*, by Alan Moore and Jerry Ordway. 176pg $24.95

Y: The Last Man 28 *(Ring of Truth* 2 of 5; Brian K. Vaughan & Pia Guerra + Jose Marzan, Jr; *Vertigo)* As Yorick fights for his life, Dr Mann and Agent 355 attempt to figure out why he survived the plague and whether the mystical Amulet of Helene played any role. Mature readers. $2.95

Marvel

Alpha Flight 9 *(Days of Future Present, Past Participle* 1 of 4; Scott Lobdell & Clayton Henry) Former Alpha Flight ally Flashback comes begging our heroes to time-jump to the past and stop his future self from dying in an attack that involves the original Alpha Flight, and Omega Flight You betcha, ya. $2.99

Art of Marvel Vol 2 (Richard Isanove; hbk) Featuring more than 100 illustrations from the 1940s through to today. 128pg $29.99

new **Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes** 1 (of 8; Joe Casey & Scott) Bi-weekly look into the early, pivotal period of the Marvel Universe, when five fledgling heroes banded together to fight the foes no single hero could overcome. $3.50

one-shot **Avengers Finale** 1 (Brian Michael Bendis & various) In the wreckage of Avengers Mansion, Earth's Mightiest Heroes meet for the very last time! 48pg $3.50

Captain America & The Falcon 9 *(Brothers and Keepers (Adelphoite Phylaxes)* 2 of 5; Christopher Priest & Joe Bennett) MODOK's origin is revealed as the Mental Organism Designed Only for Killing continues stalking former A.I.M. agents across Europe. $2.99

Exiles 54 *(Chain Lightning;* Tony Bedard & Mizuki Sakakibara) A seemingly trivial, low-key mission spirals into a cataclysmic, universe-shattering disaster. $2.99

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Marvel Age Fantastic Four 8 (John Layman & Joseph Dodd) Enter the Puppet Master, an evil mastermind who has learned to control people using action figures. $2.25

Marvel Age Spider-Man 15 *(Duel With Daredevil* 3 of 4; Todd Dezago & Shane Davis) It's a Battle under the Big Top as the Wall-Crawler and the Man Without Fear use their acrobatic skills to defeat The Ringmaster and his Circus of Crime. $2.25

Marvel Encyclopedia Vol 6: Fantastic Four (various) Definitive guide to this groundbreaking title, collecting the Fantastic Four's complete history in a comprehensive volume, from their first days to the team's landmark 500th issue and beyond! 240pg $29.99

new **Marvel Team-Up** 1 *(Golden Child* 1 of 2; Robert Kirkman & Scott Kolins) When Cerebro detects Paul Patterson – a student attending Peter Parker's school who has developed mutant powers – it sets Wolverine and Spider-Man on the same path. .. $2.25

Punisher 13 *(Mother Russia* 1 of 6; Garth Ennis & Dougie Braithwaite) Nicky Fury's got a job that needs doing in Russia. The kind of suicide mission any sane man wouldn't ponder for a second. $2.99

Sabretooth 3 (of 5; Daniel Way & Bart Sears) As Sasquatch embarks on a mission to capture or destroy Sabretooth, more mysterious questions are raised. $2.99

Spider-Girl 80 (Tom DeFalco & Pat Olliffe) As Courtney Duran finally learns Moose's terrible secret, Davida Kirby helps an injured Spider-Girl against the monstrous Dragon King. $2.99

Spider-Man Unlimited 6 (Sheldon Allen + Scott Gimple & Jim Cheung + Stuart Immonen) Two new tales of Spidey's world. First, Spider-Man must grapple with the grim spectre of defeat. Then, witness the life story of a man who'll one day be known as Thug 1. .... $2.99

Starjammers 6 (of 6; Kevin J. Anderson & Jorge Lucas) The Starjammers have declared war on the Union of Intelligent Races – but how do they plan to win? $2.99

Tomb of Dracula 2 (of 6; Rob Rodi & Jamie Tolagson) Blade and a violent team of deadly vampire slayers set out to destroy Dracula before his metamorphosis into a vampire god is complete. $2.99

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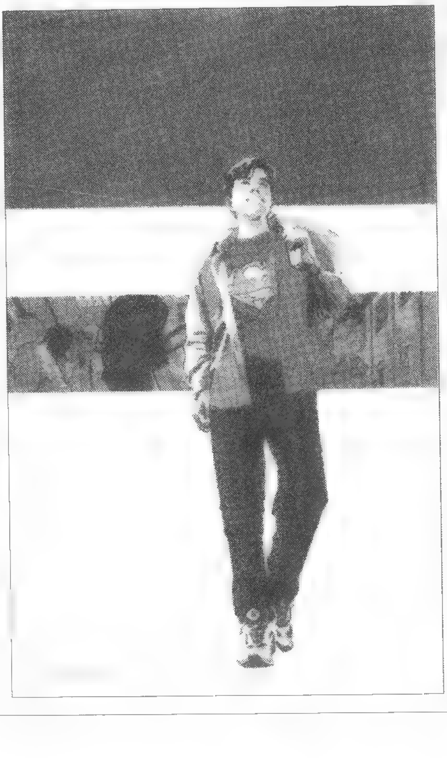
Ultimate Spider-Man 68 (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) Johnny Storm realises that despite his new flame powers and fame on the horizon, he still doesn't have a high school diploma. $2.25

Ultimate Spider-Man Vol 5 (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley; hbk) Collects the stories from Ultimate Spider-Man Vol 9: Ultimate Six and



close-up

Superman: Secret Identity

DC Comics

Writer: Kurt Busiek

Artist: Stuart Immonen

Collects the miniseries examining the life of a young Kansas man with the unfortunate name of Clark Kent. All Clark wants to be is a writer, but his daily life is filled with taunts and jibes from his peers. Then one day he awakens to discover he can fly. But where does this ability come from? 208pg $19.95

ON SALE NOVEMBER 3

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Ultimate Spider-Man Vol 11: Carnage (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley; tpbk) One of the most ruthless villains in the history of the Marvel Universe, Carnage, gets the Ultimate treatment! And though young Peter Parker has proven himself time and time again on the field of battle, can even he hope to defeat this heartless killing machine? Collecting Ultimate Spider-Man #60-65. 144pg $12.99

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ON SALE FROM

NOV 10

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one-shot **Blade of the Immortal** 95: Confession (Hiroaki Samura) Magatsu, licking his wounds after last issue's bloody showdown, plays samurai detective after he journeys to the site of a massacre. Mature. b&w $2.99

Grendel: Devil's Reign 6 (of 7; Matt Wagner & Tim Sale) After the loss of his wife, Orion has disappeared, and now a dangerously unpredictable general has his finger on the nuclear button! Mature readers. $3.50

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Star Wars: Clone Wars Adventures Vol 2 (Haden Blackman + Welles Hartley & Matt Fillbach + Shawn Fillbach) In the rolling asteroid rings above a remote planet, General Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker play a deadly game of cat and mouse against Separatist droid fighters. 96pg $6.95

DC Comics

100 Bullets #55 (Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso; *Vertigo)* After a chance encounter with a rather unassuming character, Wylie's eyes are wide-open, his mind is clear, and his sights are set on the man who did him wrong. Mature readers. $2.50

Action Comics 821 (Chuck Austen & Ivan Reis + Marc Campos) The return of Preus. The rogue Kandorian cop is assembling followers on Earth to declare a holy war on the Man of Steel! . $2.50

new **Angeltown** 1 (of 5; Gary Phillips & Shawn Martinbrough; *Vertigo)* When a pro basketball starL.A.s 1 ballermysteriously disappears after his wife is found brutally murdered, it's up to Nate Hollis to find him and either bring him to justice or prove his innocence. Mature readers. 40pg $2.95

Aquaman 24 (John Ostrander & Chris Batista + Dave Meikis) The Marauder is after secret weapons in the sunken naval bases at San Diego. Even with the aid of the Sea Devils, Aquaman will be in no shape to fend him off after a clash in the ocean depths. $2.50

The Batman Strikes! 3 (Bill Matheny & Christopher Jones + Terry Beatty) Criminals are getting caught, then disappearing – but where? When the Joker plays policeman, it's Out-law and Disorder for Gotham and The Batman. $2.25

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 185 *(Riddle Me That* 1 of 5; Shane McCarthy & Tommy Castillo + Rodney Ramos) Someone is using riddles in the kidnapping of an influential Gotham City doctor. But the crime is more brutal than anything the Dark Knight has experienced with Edward Nigma. Who's the madman behind it all? $2.50

Bloodhound 5 (Dan Jolley & Leonard Kirk + Robin Riggs) Firestorm/Bloodhound crossover. Will the new Firestorm learn the wrong kind of lesson from Clevenger? And what will the result be when Firestorm decides their only chance for survival depends on merging with Bloodhound? $2.95

Challengers of the Unknown 6 (of 6; Howard Chaykin) The surviving Challengers fight to save the world and regain their humanity! $2.95

Fables 31 (Bill Willingham & Mark Buckingham + Steve Leialoha; *Vertigo)* During the long, chilly autumn, Snow White's motherhood begins in earnest and her relationship with Bigby comes to a crossroads in a way that alters many lives. Mature readers. $2.50

Firestorm 7 (Dan Jolley & Liam Sharp + Andy Lanning) Firestorm/Bloodhound crossover. Jason's past returns to haunt him when Stevie Golek's boss comes looking for answers. $2.50

Gotham Central 25 (Greg Rucka & Michael Lark + Stefano Gaudiano) Akins is furious with the masked vigilante, and he's drawing a line that will change the relationship between Batman and the police forever! $2.50

Green Arrow 44 *(New Blood* 5 of 6; Judd Winick & Phil Hester + Ande Parks) Green Arrow's battle with the cruel and criminal Brick takes a terrible turn when a shocking revelation hits the household of Oliver Queen. $2.50

one-shot **Green Lantern: Legacy – The Last Will and Testament of Hal Jordan** (Joe Kelly & Brent Anderson + Bill Sienkiewicz; graphic novel) A touching graphic novel reflecting on the life and legacy of Earth's greatest Green Lantern. 112pg $17.95

Identity Crisis 6 (of 7; Brad Meltzer & Rags Morales + Michael Bair) From the very start, he's been on the case and sifting through clues. No one knows better what it's like to lose someone you love. He's the World's Greatest Detective. Now it's time for Batman to prove it. 40pg $3.95

JSA 67 (Geoff Johns & Dave Gibbons + James Hodgkins) Doctor Mid-Nite and Mr Terrific examine Sue Dibny's corpse in search of clues to the killer's identity. $2.50

Justice League Elite 5 (Joe Kelly & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) Introducing a new team of terrorists: Aftermath! It's up to the Elite to infiltrate its ranks, which should be easy enough since Coldcast's brother is a member. $2.50

one-shot **Kinetic** (Kelley Puckett & Warren Pleece; tpbk) One fateful day a power that lay dormant within Tom for years is finally unleashed. 144pg $9.95

one-shot **The Losers: Double Down** (Andy Diggle & Jock + Shawn Martinbrough; *Vertigo;* tpbk) Collects issues #7-12 of the series. The Losers are on the trail of the mysterious Max, the phantom CIA agent who's not supposed to exist and yet has tried to kill them all. Mature. 144pg $12.95

Nightwing 99 (Devin Grayson & Zach Howard + Andy Owens) Batman confronts Nightwing about Blockbuster's death. And where does all this leave the sultry-yet-venomous Tarantula? $2.25

one-shot **The Nikopol Trilogy** (Enki Bilal; tpbk) Alcide Nikopol is awakened in 2023 after 30 years in suspended animation, but his body is possessed by the Egyptian god Horus, on the run from his fellow gods! Mature readers. 176pg .. $17.95

Ocean 2 (of 6; Warren Ellis & Chris Sprouse + Karl Story; *WildStorm)* UN weapons inspector Nathan Kane investigates the situation at a research satellite orbiting the Jovian moon of Europa. $2.95

Plastic Man 12 (Kyle Baker) Plastic Man fins himself undone by the strangest of foes. $2.95

Scooby-Doo 90 (various) Fred becomes a soap opera star and Scooby goes scuba. Plus, short solve-it-yourself mysteries. $2.25

Smallville 11 (Dan Thomsen & various) Clark burns off steam by superspeeding across the continent, arriving in a village in the Amazon where legend says a strange visitor will save them from a creature of pure evil. 48pg $3.95

new **Wild Girl** 1 (of 6; Leah Moore & various; *America's Best Comics)* Enter the world of Rosa Torez, a 13-year-old girl whose normal life with her mum and baby brother is shattered when an alarming incident forces her to make a life- changing decision! . $2.95

Marvel

Bullseye: Greatest Hits 3 (of 5; Daniel Way & Steve Dillon Jr) It's a rumble in the jungle when Bullseye squares off against the Punisher! $2.99

District X #7 *(Underground* 1 of 6; David Hine & David Yardin) Something lives under District X, something that loves the dark – and it's leaving a trail of murders in its wake. $2.99

Emma Frost 17 *(Bloom* 5 of 6; Karl Bollers & Carlo Pagulayan) Emma has become extremely friendly with another, more experienced telepath – but is this relationship entirely healthy? $2.99

Gambit 4 *(House of Cards* 4 of 6; John Layman & Georges Jeanty) Gambit goes on the trail of his upstart rival, Fast Jack Jessup. $2.99

new **Iron Man** 1 *(Extremis* 1 of 6; Warren Ellis & Adi Granov) What is Extremis, who has unleashed it, and what does its emergence portend for the world? 48pg $3.50

Marvel Age Hulk 3 (Mike Raicht & Alex Sanchez) Bruce Banner continues to wander across the Southwest and finds himself in the town of Roswell, New Mexico, where things aren't always what they seem. $1.75

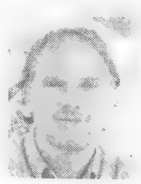
Marvel Knights 4 #12 *(The Stuff of Dreams* 3 of 3; Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Jim Muniz) Every dream must come to an end – even the fear-induced nightmares that Psycho-Man is spreading across Manhattan! $2.99

Marvel Knights Spider-Man 8 *(Venomous* 4 of 4; Mark Millar & Frank Cho) Everyone's favourite symbiote is back with a brand-new look. $2.99

Marvel Masterworks: The Avengers Vol 4 (Stan Lee & Roy Thomas + Don Heck) Captain America, Goliath, the Wasp and Hawkeye battle the villainous Sons of the Serpent, the Living Laser, Ultrana and no less than the scheming Sub-Mariner himself. Collects Avengers (Vol. 1) #31-40. 224pg$49.99

new **New Thunderbolts** 1 (of 6; Kurt Busiek & Tom Grummett) From the ashes of the Avengers a new group of heroes springs forth – all of whom happen to be former villains! $2.99

Illuminations



Highlights from November's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

The excitement is now over, the Avengers are in shock, but they're recovering. And they need to... fast, as there is yet another relaunch for them to assemble for: **New Avengers** #1. Without doubt, this will be a great comic as Brian Michael Bendis and David Finch are staying as the creative team, but why relaunch when sales have already shot up 100% since they took over with #500?

I am still convinced that continuous numbering, far from being a hindrance is or should be an aid to sales. This will be the third new #1 in six years, and newcomers are finding it difficult when trying to track down previous issues or find trades that follow something representing a logical sequence.

Anyway, the big question is: will it sell? Yes, in shed loads. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Marvel is also relaunching **Iron Man** for the third time in six years and **Captain America** for the fourth. I have to repeat myself and ask why? **Iron Man** may do well since Warren Ellis is taking over the scripting, but he would have boosted sales of the existing book anyway... **Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5**

The only Marvel title to excite my sometimes-jaded retailer palette is the relaunch of **Thunderbolts**. This series has great potential for mature themes and interesting character development, as all the team members are – or once were – villains. This makes for excellent plot twists. Kurt Busiek and Tom Grummett, fresh from their success on the six-issue miniseries crossover with the Avengers, will guarantee a top comic. This could be the sleeper of the month, overlooked because of the 'big three' relaunches. Be advised: don't miss out. Unlike my tip for the cheap box: **Marvel Team Up** #1. A great title in its day, but now made superfluous by all the miniseries, crossover events and one-shot specials that proliferate the Marvel product line. **Sales 2/5 Quality 4/5**

Not a lot happening over at DC this month. There is a 12-issue JLA miniseries starting, **JLA: Classified**, written by Grant Morrison and art by Ed McGuiness which will do reasonably well, but that's all. **Sales 3/5 Quality 5/5**

The biggest event is **Detective Comics** #800. This, as with all landmark issues, will sell at least 25% more than normal, but apart from the extra pages there isn't much to really shout about in this issue. **Sales 4/5 Quality 4/5**

The biggest event of the month is the launch over at Avatar of the Warren Ellis creator-owned line up. There are four titles being launched, and I would recommend them all: **Angel Stomp Future**, with art by Juan Jose Ryp, is a sci-fi romp; **Frank Ironwine** is a title inspired by crime pulps with art by Carla Speed of **Finders** fame; **Quit City**, a classic pulp adventure story with art by Laurenn McCubbin and –my favourite – **Simon Spector**, a title inspired by the likes of **The Spider**, **The Shadow** and **Doc Savage**.

There's not a superhero in sight and all four titles are inspired by the pulp fiction of the 1930s. Each issue will be 32 pages, in black and white, with some text pages from Ellis. This line of comics gives me something fresh to offer to first-time visitors and an alternative to those who've become bored by spandex. There is something good happening at Avatar every month and if your shop doesn't stock their titles then get a request in now and maybe they will start stocking them soon. **Sales 4/5 Quality5/5**

With 22 years of comic retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff has also produced his ***Illuminations*** *monthly fanzine for 19 years before moving it to the web.*

one-shot **Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe: Book of the Dead 2004** (various) Includes in-depth bios on more than 40 of Marvel's dearly departed, from ancient ones, old soldiers, kid sidekicks and Stacys to casualties of Avengers Disassembled. 48pg .. $3.99

Powers 6 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming) Kidnapped by supervillains, and tortured by their leader... She's been missing for hours. What is the fate of Detective Deena Pilgrim? Mature readers. $2 95

The Pulse 6 (Brian Michael Bendis & Brent Anderson) Jessica Jones and Luke Cage's lives have been destroyed by the events of the Secret War, so what is Jessica going to do about it? $2.99

new **The Pulse Vol 1: Thin Air** (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley; tpbk) Former superhero and current private investigator Jessica Jones has just been offered a new job: a position with the Bugle's new superhero section, The Pulse! Jessica's first assignment: to uncover the true identity of a former Bugle reporter's super-powered murderer. Collecting The Pulse #1-5. 120pg $13.99

Punisher Max Vol 2: Kitchen Irish (Garth Ennis & Leandro Fernandez; tpbk) When a bomb explodes in a Hell's Kitchen pub, Frank Castle embarks on a deadly mission that pits him against two rival gangs. Collects Punisher #7-12. 144pg $14.99

She-Hulk 9 (Dan Slott & Juan Bobillo) After months in deep space, She-Hulk returns to Earth a changed woman. A major power boost has made her stronger than ever. $2.99

She-Hulk Vol 1: Single Green Female (Dan Slott & Juan Bobillo; tpbk) Collecting She-Hulk #1-6. 144pg $14.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 21 (Paul Jenkins & Talent Caldwell) Ben Grimm's all-night poker games have become legendary among the superhero set, and for the first time Spider-Man has been asked to join the table! $2.25

Thor: Son of Asgard 10 (*Worthy* 1 of 3; Akira Yoshida & Greg Tocchini) Frustrated by his inability to achieve his goal, Thor comes to question what makes a person worthy. $2.99

Ultimate X-Men 53 (Brian K. Vaughan & Andy Kubert) When the X-Men arrive at the Empire State Building to take down the Fenris folks, it leads to a big rematch between Gambit and Wolverine! $2.25

Warlock 3 (of 6; Greg Pak & Charlie Adlard) The training of a god has ended, and now his reign will begin. Prepare yourself for the Second Coming of Adam Warlock. $2.99

X-Men: The End – Dreamers and Demons 5 (of 6; Chris Claremont & Sean'Chen) X-Men past and present are under siege by their greatest enemies, so witness a daring escape attempt from the Neverland concentration camp... $2.99

ON SALE FROM

NOV 17

Dark Horse

one-shot **Birthday** (Meimu; tpbk) The fourth in a series of five manga based on The Ring, this is a trilogy of stories. *The Casket Floating in the Sky* centres on Mai Takano, and how she becomes wrapped deeper into Sadako's grasp. 160pg b&w $12.95

Conan 10 (Kurt Busiek & Cary Nord + Thomas Yeates) Burgling a temple, Conan stumbles ona dead body and is blamed for the crime. But can the city guard even hope to hold him? ... $2.99

Freaks of the Heartland 6 (of 6; Steve Niles & Greg Ruth) Young Trevor Owen and his brother Will are almost at the end of their road – they're on the run from the law while Gristlewood Valley burns with the flames they started. $2.99

one-shot **Marge's Little Lulu** Vol 1 (John Stanley & Iving Tripp; tpbk) Whether through outsmarting Tubby and his fellow Boys Only Club members in the name of fairness and equality, weaving tall tales to entertain the irascible tot Alvin, or using her wit to think her way out of a million impossible situations, Little Lulu got there first. 200pg b&w $9.95

new **Star Wars: Obsession** 1 (of 5, Haden Blackman & Brian Ching + Brad Anderson) While Anakin Skywalker enjoys a brief respite from the Clone Wars (and a reunion with his secret wife Padme Amidala), Obi-Wan Kenobi embarks on a personal mission. $2.99

DC Comics

Adventures of Superman 634 (Greg Rucka & Matthew Clark + Andy Lanning) Superman confronts the new Parasites, twins of evil with more devastating powers than the original power-sapping villain. $2.50

Batman: Gotham Knights 59 (Robbie Morrison & Charlie Adlard) Mr Freeze returns, looking to ice Gotham City once and for all! But when he and Batman end up facing death together, can they set aside their differences long enough to live? $2.50

Birds of Prey 76 (Gail Simone & Ed Benes) As the Birds rise from the rubble of *War Games* and take flight, the new story arc, *Hero Hunters,* begins with a bang $2.50

The Books of Magick: Life During Wartime 5 (Neil Gaiman + Si Spencer & Dean Ormston; *Vertigo)* It's a battle on the beach as Cat's life hangs in the balance, and it all hinges on a magical underwater kiss from Tim. Mature. $2.50

Catwoman 37 (Ed Brubaker & Paul Gulacy + Jimmy Palmiotti) Catwoman faces new dangers within her territory, both from the police and the citizens she's sworn to protect. $2.50

Ex Machina 6 (Brian K. Vaughan & Tony Harris + Tom Feister; *WildStorm)* As flashbacks reveal the role the National Security Agency played in the career of the superheroic Great Machine, Mayor Mitchell Hundred makes what might be the most controversial decision in the history of New York City politics! $2.95

Hawkman 34 (Jimmy Palmiotti & various) A mysterious statue from India arrives for Hawkman, bringing with it the murderous Manticore. $2.50

Hawkman Archives Vol 2 (Gardner Fox & Murphy Anderson; hbk) Collecting Silver Age Hawkman #1-8, pitting the Winged Warrior against foes old and new. 216pg $49.95

final issue **H-E-R-O** 22 (Will Pfeifer & Dale Eaglesham + Wade von Grawbadger) Robby Reed, failed metahuman Matt Allen and schoolgirl Andrea Allen face off against the deadly maniac who possessed the H-device. $2.50

Human Target 16 (Peter Milligan & Cliff Chiang; *Vertigo)* Slipping dangerously deeper into the identity of Paul James – the supposed New Messiah – Chance promises to raise the dead before a TV audience. Mature readers. $2.95

JLA 108 *(Crime Syndicate of Amerika* 2 of 8; Kurt Busiek & Ron Garney + Dan Green) The Crime Syndicate comes to our Earth to make sure the JLA's enemies never get the chance to wipe out their world ever again. $2.25

JSA: Strange Adventures 4 (of 6; Kevin J. Anderson & Barry Kitson + Gary Erskine) Lord Dynamo unleashes the awesome power of his gigantic zeppelin and an army of cyborg zombies! 40pg $3.50

Lucifer 56 (Mike Carey & Peter Gross + Ryan Kelly; *Vertigo)* While the fates of Lucifer and Elaine hang in the balance, Mazikeen and Lilith enjoy their long-awaited reunion. Mature readers.$2.50

Manhunter 4 (Marc Andreyko & Jesus Saiz + Jimmy Palmiotti) Tech-wizard-turned-federal-informant Dylan Battles wishes he could have his old life back. $2.50

one-shot **Outsiders: Sum of All Evil** (various; tpbk) Collects Outsiders #8-15, in which the Outsiders face a literal demon from Hell. 192pg $14.95

Powerpuff Girls 56 (various) Girls will be girls and powers will be powers in this trio of Powerpuff tales about bike racing, getting to school on time and cooking with Mojo Jojo. $2 25

Robin 132 *(Fresh Blood* 1 of 4; Bill Willingham & Damion Scott) Robin/Batgirl crossover. Robin is coping with crippling personal losses, and how he deals with these heartaches will send him in an unexpected direction – and into the path of the stone-fisted Batgirl! $2.25

new **Space Ghost** 1 (Joe Kelly & Ariel Olivetti) A young policeman joins an elite space force that turns out to be horribly corrupt. . $2.95

Teen Titans 18 *(Titans Tomorrow* 2 of 3; Geoff Johns & Mike McKone + Marlo Alquiza) Face to face with themselves 10 years from now, the Teen Titans make a pact that doesn't bode well for the future. $2.50

Terra Obscura Vol 2 #4 (of 6; Alan Moore & various; *America's Best Comics)* Tom Strange finds his plans of reaching the mysterious craft thwarted by a most unexpected source just as the time distortions turn deadly! $2.95

final issue **Tom Strong's Terrific Tales** 12 (Alan Moore & various; *America's Best Comics)* Alan Moore and Peter Bagge collaborate on *The Strongs,* while Jonni Future goes through the looking glass. Final issue. $2.95

one-shot **Wildstorm Winter Special** (various; *WildStorm)* A quartet of action stories, starring WildStorm's favourite characters. 48pg $4.95

Wonder Woman 210 (Greg Rucka & Drew Johnson + Ray Snyder) As her deadliest foe threatens to petrify millions with a single glance, the Amazing Amazon adopts a unique strategy – one with serious repercussions! $2.25

Y: The Last Man – Safeword (Brian K. Vaughan & various; *Vertigo;* tpbk) Reprints issues #18-23 of the series. As the Last Man on Earth and his companions continue to head West, the story takes a detour into the psychological. Mature readers. 144pg $12.95

Marvel

Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes 2 (of 8; Joe Casey & Scott) Bi-weekly look into the early, pivotal period of the Marvel Universe, when five fledgling heroes banded together to fight the foes no single hero could overcome $3.50

Cable/Deadpool 9 *(The Passion of the Cable* 3 of 6; Fabian Nicieza & Patrick Zircher) Will the new Six Pack tear Cable's floating sanctuary to the ground if it means ruining mankind's last hope for peace? $2.99

new **Captain America** 1 (Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting) The Red Skull lays the groundwork for his most devastating attack ever on Captain America and the land he holds dear. $2.99

Daredevil Vol 10: The Widow (Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev; tpbk) Daredevil's fiery, redheaded ex-partner returns to Hell's Kitchen to help the new Kingpin keep the streets clean. Collects Daredevil #61-66. 168pg $17.99

Doctor Spectrum 4 (of 6; Samm Barnes & Travel Foreman) The crystal that powered Hyperion's ship and became embedded in Dr Spectrum's arm has plans for him. Mature. . $2.99

Fantastic Four 520 *(Galactus* 1 of 6; Mark Waid & Michael Wieringo) There is no way Marvel wishes to reveal the content of this title, so you'll have to read it in the comic shops. $2.99

Invaders 4 *(Blood* 1 of 2; Allan Jacobsen & C. P. Smith) The ancestral curse of the Falsworth Bloodline has returned, and this time they're out for Spitfire's blood! $2.99

Madrox 3 (of 5; Peter David & Pablo Raimondi) Guido has a major smackdown with the assassin, Clay, while Wolfsbane seeks the goods on a philandering husband who may be cheating on his wife. $2.99

Marvel Age Spider-Man 16 *(The Return of the Green Goblin* 4 of 4; Mike Raicht & Gus Vazquez) The return of Spidey's greatest foe – The Green Goblin! $2.25

Marvel Age Spider-Man Team-Up 3 (Todd Dezago & Jonboy Meyers) It's fast-paced action far beneath the streets of Manhattan as Spidey teams up with junior X-Man, Kitty Pryde, to confront the Morlocks. $1.75

Marvel Team-Up 2 *(Golden Child* 2 of 2; Robert Kirkman & Scott Kolins) Will Wolverine and Spider-Man work together, like some two-headed Sesame Street monster? Or will they clash? $2.25

New X-Men 7 *(Haunted* 1 of 3; Nunzio Defilippis & Christina Weir + Michael Ryan) Someone – or something – is haunting the halls of the Xavier Institute, and it's up to the New X-Men to get to the bottom of it! $2.99

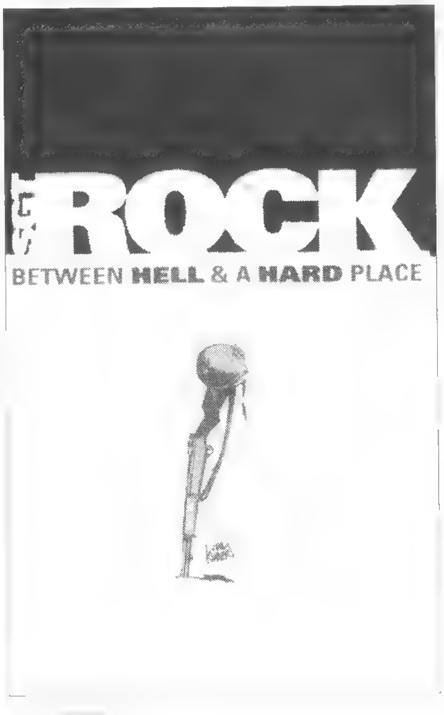
Punisher 14 *(Mother Russia* 2 of 6; Garth Ennis & Dougie Braithwaite) Nicky Fury's got a job that needs doing in Russia. The kind of suicide mission any sane man wouldn't ponder for a second. $2.99

new **Spider-Man: India** 1 (Jeevan J. Kang + Suresh Seetharaman & Sharad Devarajan + Jeevan J. Kang) Everybody knows the story of Spider-Man – but what if it wasn't a New Yorker named Peter Parker, but an Indian teenager named Pavitr Prabhakar who was gifted with the abilities of the spider? $2 99

Ultimate Spider-Man 69 (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) Johnny Storm realises that despite his new flame powers and fame on the horizon, he still doesn't have a high school diploma.$2.25

Wolverine 22 *(Enemy of the State* 3 of 6; Mark Millar & John Romita Jr. + Klaus Janson) The Fantastic Four is trapped in the Baxter Building with the world's deadliest weapon... Wolverine! ... $2.25

X-Force 4 (of 6; Rob Liefeld + Fabian Nicieza & various) Cable, Shatterstar and pals encounter the evil of the


ROCK
BETWEEN HELL & A HARD PLACE

close-up

Sgt. Rock: Between Hell And A Hard Place

Vertigo Comics

Writer: Brian Azzarello

Artist: Joe Kubert

This World War II tale puts Sgt Rock in the midst of a murder mystery behind enemy lines. When four German prisoners of the Easy Company are slaughtered, Sgt Rock must find the killer and keep his men alive. Mature readers. 144pg $17.95

ON SALE NOVEMBER 24

Administrator and the terrible power of the Watchtower. $2.99

X-Men 164 (*Heroes and Villains* 4 of 4; Chuck Austen) The explosive conclusion to the battle between the X-Men and the newly re-formed Brotherhood of Mutants. $2.25

X-Statix Vol 4: X-Statix Vs The Avengers (Peter Milligan & Mike Allred; tpbk) X-Force squares off against Earth's Mightiest Heroes, the Avengers, in the rumble of the century. Collecting X-Statix #19-26. 192pg $19.99

ON SALE FROM

NOV 24

Dark Horse

The Chronicles of Conan Vol 6: The Curse of the Golden Skull and Other Stories (Roy Thomas & John Buscema + Neal Adams; tpbk) Collecting and celebrating Roy Thomas's efforts on Conan, weaving a narrative tapestry of action, intrigue, and heroism. 160pg $15.95

new **The Incredibles** 1 (of 4, Brad Bird & Ricardo Curtis + Ramon Perez) Mr Incredible is now simply Bob Parr, living the suburban life. However, family life and the daily nine-to-five routine aren't enough for Bob, who frequently sneaks out to do 'hero work' in the evenings. . $2 99

new **Jingle Belle** 1 (of 4, Paul Dini & Jose Garabaldi + Stephanie Gladden) Jingle Belle is once again trying to sell her life story as the unsung hero of the holiday season. She again defies Santa's 'no publicity' edict and signs with a cartoon producer to make an all-new animated special. $2.99

Star Wars: Clone Wars Vol 5 – The Best Blades (various; tpbk) Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker battle for survival. Senator Bail Organa struggles to preserve freedom within the Republic, and Master Yoda strives to prevent an old friend from plunging a system into war in four exciting stories from the Clone Wars. 144pg $14.95

Star Wars: Republic 71 (*The Dreadnaughts of Rendili* 3 of 3; John Ostrander & Jan Duursema + Dan Parsons) Anakin Skywalker and renegade Jedi Quinlan Vos team up in their starfighters. Vos is finally captured and brought to justice for his crimes, and Anakin has what he hopes will be a final showdown with dark Jedi Asajj Ventress high above the dark alleys of Coruscant. $2.99

Super Manga Blast! 47 (various) Kenichi Sonoda's current Cannon God Exaxxion story arc nears its conclusion, with Earth's champion attempting to outwit and outmanoeuvre the alien invaders. Mature. b&w 128pg ... $5.99

Usagi Yojimbo 80 (Stan Sakai) Wandering through feudal Japan, masterless samurai Usagi Yojimbo encounters a man developing a flying machine. 24pg b&w $2.99

DC Comics

Adam Strange 3 (of 8; Andy Diggle & Pascal Ferry) Drifting helplessly in the radioactive void that once was Rann's star system, Strange is as good as dead, until he's waylaid by a Thanagarian battle cruiser! $2.95

The Authority: Revolution 2 (of 12; Ed Brubaker & Dustin Nguyen + Richard Friend; *WildStorm)* Reeling from their clash with a new superteam in Philadelphia, the Authority puts the pieces together and comes up with more questions than answers Mature. $2.95

close-up

Blade: Black and White

Marvel

Writers: Marv Wolfman +
Chris Claremont

Artists: Tony Dezuniga +
Gene Colan

A war is raging, and he has a job to do; for Blade the Vampire Hunter, there are no shades of grey! This volume collects material from Vampire Tales #8-9, Marvel Preview #3 and #6, Blade: Crescent City Blues #1, and Marvel Shadows And Light #1. 144pg $15.99

ON SALE NOVEMBER 24

Batgirl 58 (*Fresh Blood* 2 of 4; Andersen Gabrych & Ale Garza + Jesse Delperdang) Robin/Batgirl crossover. Cassandra teams up with Robin to pick up the pieces. Can these crimefighting teens stop the lethal blades of Nightwing's archnemesis, Shrike? $2.50

Batman 634 (Andersen Gabrych & Paul Lee + Brian Horton) The gang war that swept through Gotham changed the landscape of the Dark Knight's world. Now Batman and Nightwing must pick up the pieces of this shattered city. .. $2.25

Cartoon Network Block Party 3 (various) Dexter sends a spaceship after his missing sock, and the Eds dream of being superheroes. $2.25

Catwoman: When in Rome 3 (Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale) Catwoman's a long way from home so the Roman crime bosses decide it's time to bring a little Gotham City to her – by hiring an unexpected supervillainess to take her out! $3.50

Doom Patrol 6 (*Robot Wars* 2 of 2; John Byrne & Byrne + Doug Hazlewood) Robotman's having a rough time surviving in the ultimate arena for malevolent machinery. $2.50

Elric: Making of a Sorcerer 3 (of 4; Michael Moorcock & Walter Simonson) Elric embarks on another dreamquest. This time, he must complete a trial to test his worthiness for the throne of Melnibon. 48pg $5.95

The Flash 216 (*Sins of the Father* 3 of 3; Geoff Johns & Howard Porter + Livesay) The Flash is forced to make one of the toughest choices of his life, as he comes face-to-face with Barry Allen's biggest regret. $2.25

Green Lantern: Rebirth 2 (of 8; Geoff Johns & Ethan Van Sciver + Prentis Rollins) Hal Jordan searches for his next role as he pays a visit to his old airfield. $2.95

Hellblazer 202 (*Reasons to be Cheerful* 1 of 4; Mike Carey & Leonardo Manco; *Vertigo)* John Constantine's three illegitimate children are back – only this time, they're going after John's few remaining friends and loved ones. Mature readers. $2.75

JLA Vol 15: The 10th Circle (John Byrne + Chris Claremont & Byrne + Jerry Ordway; tpbk) Collects the storyline from JLA #94-99, in which the JLA investigates a rash of child disappearances 144pg $12 95

Justice League of America Archives Vol 9 (Dennis O'Neil & various; hbk) Collects Justice League of America #71-80 (1969 1970). 228pg $49.95

Kinetic 9 (Kelley Puckett & Warren Pleece) In an effort to test the limits of his abilities, Tom decides to go to the extreme and ends up shooting himself in the foot – literally! $2.50

The Losers 18 (*The Pass* 3 of 4; Andy Diggle & Jock; *Vertigo)* The Losers face the battle of their lives in the mountain fortress of an Afghan warlord. Mature readers. $2.95

Outsiders 18 (*Most Wanted* 2 of 3; Judd Winick & Carlos D'Anda) Aided by America's Most Wanted host John Walsh, the Outsiders confront a child slavery ring, while Grace is forced to face pieces of her troubled past. $2.50

The Razor's Edge: Warblade 2 (John Ridley & Simon Bisley; *WildStorm)* Reno Bryce, aka Warblade, must come to terms with the horrific ending to issue 1. Mature readers. $2.95

Richard Dragon 7 (Chuck Dixon & Scott McDaniel + Andy Owens) As the Bronze Tiger clings to life in a Detroit hospital, Richard Dragon is confronted by a dangerous face from his pasta past that includes training the Dark Knight himself! $2.50

Sgt. Rock: Between Hell And A Hard Place (Brian Azzarello & Joe Kubert; *Vertigo) See Close-Up on previous page.*

Sleeper Season Two #6 (of 12; Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips; *WildStorm)* Can Holden trust Miss Misery enough to bring her in on his own secret agenda? Mature readers. $2 95

Superman 211 (*For Tomorrow* 8 of 12; Brian Azzarello & Jim Lee + Scott Williams) Still reeling from his brutal encounter with Wonder Woman, Superman realises that the deadly assassin Mr Orr has been using the Man of Steel's clouded judgement all along. $2.50

The Technopriests Vol 2 (Alexandro Jodorowsky & Zoran Janjetov + Fred Beltran; tpbk) In a galaxy ruled by the TechnoGuild, a boy struggles to destroy the Guild from within! Mature readers. 144pg $14.95

Teen Titans Go! 13 (J. Torres & Todd Nauck + Lary Stucker) A man stricken with werewolfism enlists the aid of the Titans to watch him and make sure he doesn't trash the city. $2.25

The Witching 6 (Jonathan Vankin & Leigh Gallagher + Dan Green; *Vertigo)* On the run from the law and other weird forces, Elsa takes refuge in a creepy roadside motel that proves anything but a safe haven. Mature readers. .. $2.95

Marvel

one-shot **Alpha Flight Vol 1: You Gotta Be Kiddin' Me** (Scott Lobdell & Clayton Henry; tpbk) The premiere of an all-new, all-different Alpha Flight! The Canadian superteam that's given the Uncanny X-Men a run for their money returns in a new series that will be the talk of Manitoba. Collecting Alpha Flight #1-6. 144pg $14.99

Amazing Fantasy 6 (of 6; Fiona Avery & Mark Brooks) What's the public identity of Marvel's newest media darling? $2.99

Amazing Spider-Man 514 (*Sins Past* 6 of 6; J. Michael Straczynski & Mike Deodato) All is revealed in the pulse-pounding conclusion to *Sins Past.* $2.25

Astonishing X-Men 7 (*Dangerous* 1 of 6; Joss Whedon & John Cassaday) A tragic death at the school reveals a powerful enemy living among the X-Men that they could never have suspected. $2.99

Black Widow 3 (of 6; Richard K. Morgan & Bill Sienkiewicz) The intrigue continues as Natasha Romanova uses herself as bait to get vital info. ... $2.99

one-shot **Blade: Black and White** (Marv Wolfman + Chris Claremont & Tony Dezuniga + Gene Colan; tpbk) *See Close-Up, above.*

Daredevil 67 (*Golden Age* 2 of 4; Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev) Learn who was kingpin before The Kingpin. And what does he have to do with the legend of the White Tiger? $2.99

Elektra: The Hand 4 (of 5; Akira Yoshida & Chris Gossett) The Hand continues to grow in power as it drives out foreign influence from Japan. $2.99

Essential Iron Man Vol 2 (Stan Lee & Don Heck + Gene Colan; tpbk) Iron Man faces Ultimo, the Mandarin, the Titanium Man, the ever-popular communist menace and more! Collects Tales of Suspense #73-99 Iron Man & Sub-Mariner #1 and Iron Man #1-10. 584pg $16.99

Excalibur 7 (Food Fight 3 of 3; Chris Claremont & Aaron Lopresti) Who are the 16 Million, and what do they have against Professor X? $2.99

Kabuki 3 (David Mack) Kabuki is on a plane leaving Japan, leaving the Noh agency behind. A new passport, a new name, a new look, a new job, and a new life. Mature readers. $2.99

one-shot **Marvel Holiday Special 2004** (Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Tom Defalco) Tom Defalco brings you A Christmas Carol starring Spider-Man, while Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa writes a Hanukkah story with Ben Grimm. 48pg $3.99

Marvel Masterworks: Golden Age Captain America Vol 1 (various; hbk) Re-masters and restores the first four issues of Captain America from 1941. Return to the Golden Age of comics as Cap and Bucky come face to face with the Red Skull, the Ringmaster of Death, Nazi minions and more! 264pg $49.99

Mystique 21 (*Quiet* 2 of 5; Sean McKeever & Manuel Garcia) Mystique is caught between two masters – Charles Xavier and the Quiet Man. $2.99

new **New Avengers** 1 (*New Avengers* 1 of 5; Brian Michael Bendis & David Finch) After the devastating destruction of the original Avengers, what sort of threat to the world could persuade Captain America to assemble an all-new team? And who could be on this team? Well, Cap Iron Man, Spider-Man and Wolverine are interested... The start of a major new proposed 500 issue series. $2.25

New Thunderbolts 2 (of 6; Kurt Busiek & Tom Grummett) From the ashes of the Avengers a new group of heroes springs forth – all of whom happen to be former villains! $2.99

Nightcrawler 3 (*The Devil Inside* 3 of 4; Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Darick Robertson) Nightcrawler has enlisted the help of his one-time girlfriend, Amanda Sefton – aka Magik – to get to the bottom of the mystery of the 13 dead children. $2.99

NYX 7 (*Wannabe* 7 of 7; Joe Quesada & Robert Teranishi) The kids come to realise why they have been brought together and what it really means to be a mutant in the Big Apple. $2.99

Powerless 6 (of 6; Matt Cherniss & Peter Johnson & Michael Gaydos) What truth will psychiatrist William Watts learn when the lives of Peter Parker, Matt Murdock and Logan all converge on him for the last time? $2.99

one-shot **Powers: Forever** (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming; tpbk) Includes the entire unedited script to the controversial Powers 31, a look into Oeming's research and sketch work for every era, bonus text pieces, a cover gallery and more. Mature. 272pg $19.95

Rogue 5 (*Going Rogue* 5 of 6; Rob Rod & Cliff Richards) The love triangle between Rogue, Gambit and the mysterious stranger who's been both helping and hindering Rogue in her quest heats up. $2.99

Ultimate Elektra 4 (*Devil's Due* 4 of 5; Mike Carey & Salvador Larroca) With Elektra's father imprisoned for a murder he didn't commit, the only way Elektra can clear his name is to reunite with her old flame, Matt Murdock! $2.25

Ultimate Fantastic Four 13 (Warren Ellis & Andy Kubert) Young Reed Richards wants to duplicate the accident that changed the four into the bizarre beings they've become and thereby reverse the process. $2.25

Venom Vol 3: Twist (Daniel Way & Skottie Young; tpbk) Patricia Robertson must gain control of the alien symbiote that's eating away at her long enough to kill the original Venom, Eddie Brock. But Spider-Man has other plans and enlists the help of the Fantastic Four. Collecting Venom #14-18. 120pg $13.99

RELEASED AND ON SALE IN

NOVEMBER

Abstract Studios

Strangers in Paradise 70 (Terry Moore) What does Katchoo think of Casey's new job and what is she doing in Vegas anyway? 24pg b&w .. . $2.95

Strangers in Paradise Pocket Vol 3 (Terry Moore; tpbk) With Katchoo's past buried with Darcy, things should be looking up for our trio. But will David soon follow in Darcy's footsteps? 372pg b&w . $17.95

Strangers in Paradise Vol 15: Tomorrow Now (Terry Moore, tpbk) Contains issues #64-69. Katchoo launches her new life as an up-and-coming artist with a gallery showing 100 nude paintings of Francine and FBI undercover agent Sara. 114pg b&w $14.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

15 Minutes 2 (Elinskas + Hedgecock & Kelleher) In *The Harsh Light of Day*, find out if it is possible for a hero to fall in love without those around him or her paying the price. 24pg $3.95

one-shot **Bombaby** (Antony Mazzotta; tpbk) *See Close-Up, below.*

Wretch Vol 2: Devils Lullaby (Phil Hester; tpbk) The only thing weirder than the dangers threatening Glass City is the hero who protects it. 120pg b&w $13.95

Autumn 2 (Tommy Kovac) Autumn's magic clashes with Schizandra's purported powers as village protectionist All is not as it seems 24pg b&w $2.95

new **Next Exit** 1 (Christy Kijewski) Trapped in a strange and dangerous world where reality is an illusion and human beings are the minority, everyone is searching for one thing – an Exit. 24pg b&w$2.95

Pirate Club 4 (Derek Hunter) The Pirate Club doesn't waste any time to collect their thoughts before running off to meet up with the dirty-faced kids club On the way, booby traps, rogue clubs, and an angry officer push the Pirate Club to their limits! 24pg b&w $2.95

Seamonsters & Superheroes 7 (Scott Mills) It's the true story of the history of the Seamonsters versus the Superheroes as told by galactic archivist SunStar. Each page presented in the style of a different cartoonist. 24pg b&w $2.95

X-Ray Comics Vol 2: Swine (various; tpbk) Collecting the early works of Little Gloomy/Kid Gravity creators Landry Walker and Eric Jones. Read about the continuing adventures of Clay and his deranged friends as they come to terms with life. Mature. 112pg b&w . .. $11 95

Antarctic

one-shot **The Agents Pocket Manga** (Ben Dunn; tpbk) Thirty years after Washington and Moscow are destroyed in nuclear fire, a global protectorate named the Agnecy has been formed in Britain. Its members are the elite of the spy community, using espionage and counteraction to enforce their guardianship. 136pg b&w $9.99

Gold Digger 58 (Fred Perry) Luan and Gar begin their treacherous journey through the Proving Grounds, traversing a gauntlet of traps, dangers, and guardian spirits – and that's just to reach the first of the True Trials. $2.99

Heaven Sent 6 (Benn Dunn) Just as Kyle learns more about the places of men, angels, and demons in the world order, that order is about to change – with Kyle at the centre of it all! b&w .. $2.99

I Hunt Monsters 9 (Rod Espinosa & Craig Babiar) Deep in the Mayan jungles, Will and company feel more than the heat under the assault of chupacabra cadres. b&w $2.99

Neotopia Vol 4 #4 (Rod Espinosa) Even with Chirop pilots giving the Mathenian ships better maneuverability, the aerial battle is intense. $2.99

Ninja High School Pocket Manga Vol 4 (Ben Dunn & various, tpbk) A county fair day in nearby Flugerville goes out of control when a local ice-cream heiress decides she doesn't want competition from Sammi's booth. 136pg b&w $9.99

Ninja High School 122 (Robby Bevard & Katie Bair) Michael finally gets up the guts to ask Yumei to the prom, but doesn't want to hurt his best friend Guru by doing it behind Guru's back. b&w $2.99

Panzer 1946 #2 (Ted Nomura & various) In real history, only two Maus tanks were running at the war's end but in this alternate history, a brigade of giant tanks are released against the Allies, and some are piloted by women! 48pg b&w $5.95

APC

Assassin School 7 (Phil Littler & Edu Francisco) Edu Francisco returns to the APC fold with a two-part story with Emma Lee and her friend mixed up with a gang of smugglers – body part smugglers! 28pg $3.50

B1n4ry 5 (Richard Emms & Jim Sutherns) The Virus is sent out to hunt down any beings created by the B1N4RY codeincluding Miranda, The Hackers, and B1N4RY himself. 28pg $3.50

NEW B1n4ry Vol 1 (Richard Emms & Jim Sutherns; tpbk) The first four issues of the miniseries collected, with an added bonus of a special zero issue only available with this printing. 100pg $16.95

Chase 3 (of 10, Adriano & Inaki Miranda) Enter Hogarth Mosel, private investigator. Hogarth is smart enough to know this is not a sweet case, and the Chinese mob is not a nice ingredient! 28pg $3.50

new **Darkham Vale Dracou Imperative** Vol 1 (Jack Lawrence; tpbk) Collects the first four issues of the The Dracou Imperative, and features extra pages with alternate covers from artists such as Jonboy Meyers, Dan Boultwood, and Monster Club artist Theo Bain. 100pg ... $16.95

new **Faro Korbit** Vol 1 (Mike Baron & Mel Rubi + John Feeney; tpbk) The first four issues of this series telling the tale of Faro Korbita mystical superhero that makes Dr Strange look more like Mary Poppins. 100pg $16 95

Monster Club 6 (Richard Emms & Dan Boultwood) The Club's leading lady, Mia, is sent to an all-girls maladjusted boarding school where reports of a night creature roaming around the grounds have been reported. 28pg $3.50

Archie Comics

Archie 553 (various) A bump on the head turns grumpy Mr Lodge into jolly St. Nick – and the townsfolk end up with wads of cash instead of toys. $2.19

Archie & Friends 87 (George Gladir & Rex Lindsey) A pirate tale sees Archie and friends out on the high seas. $2.19

Betty 143 (various) It's the coldest night of the year, but a date with Adam is sure to warm things up for Betty! $2.19

Betty & Veronica 204 (various) Despite all their preparation, Betty and Veronica note a definite lack of Christmas spirit. Will the magic of the season prevail? $2.19

Sonic the Hedgehog 143 (*The Original Freedom Fighters* 2 of 2; Romy Chacon & Art Mawhinney + Jim Amash) All good heroes have their own heroes, and this story tells the tale of the heroes Sonic and the Freedom Fighters looked up to. $2.19

Veronica 157 (Dan Parent) Veronica is looking to get away for the winter, but all she gets is stuck in airport when a blizzard grounds all departing flights! $2.19

Avatar Press

Garth Ennis' 303 #2 (Garth Ennis & Jacen Burrows) Russian Spetsnaz battle British SAS for a prize buried deep in Afghanistan's mountains, but neither suspects that a third force is watching their every move. Mature. $3.99

Brian Pulido's Belladonna 3 (Brian Pulido & Clint Hilinski) The hunt for the Vikings who killed Colleen's love leads her into an enslaved town. With a huge number of foes, she must call on her animal friends to help lead the assault! b&w $3.99

one-shot **Brian Pulido's Lady Death: Dead Rising** (Brian Pulido & Romano Molenaar + Di Amorim) Learn everything you need to know about the monthly Medieval Lady Death series which picks up right where CrossGen's Lady Death: A Medieval Tale left off. b&w $2.50

From the Desk of Warren Ellis Vol 1 & 2 (Warren Ellis) These two volumes collect Ellis's essays, columns, journals, lectures, travelogues, and fragments written for an Internet audience. 80pg b&w $6 95

one-shot **Tim Vigil's Webwitch** (Tim Vigil; tpbk) Includes all three issues of the series, as well as the special preview story from the Web Witch Companion, with art by Tim Vigil. Mature readers. 80pg b&w $10.99

one-shot **Warren Ellis' Angel Stomp Future** 1 (Warren Ellis & Juan Jose Ryp) Science fiction pulp-inspired title, lavishly illustrated. Mature. b&w $3.50

one-shot **Warren Ellis' Dark Blue** (Warren Ellis & Jacen Burrows; graphic novel) Violent cop Frank Christchurch has too many problems. He has a partner who's convinced he's mentally ill, a commanding officer on smack, and a killer whom no one else seems to want to catch. Mature. 72pg b&w $8.95

one-shot **Warren Ellis' Frank Ironwine** 1 (Warren Ellis & Carla Speed) Title in the vein of crime pulps by Raymond Chandler and Dashiel Hammett. Mature readers. b&w $3 50

one-shot **Warren Ellis' Quit City** 1 (Warren Ellis & Laurenn McCubbin) Emma Pierson is part of an elite group: brave and skilled technological explorers. She's the classic pulp adventure heroine, thrown into reverse. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

one-shot **Warren Ellis' Scars** (Warren Ellis & Jacen Burrows; tpbk) John Cain has been working Homicide long enough to get hard to pretty much anything; even wrenching personal loss. Today, it all gets too much. Collects the miniseries. Mature readers. 160pg b&w ... $17.99

one-shot **Warren Ellis' Simon Spector** 1 (Warren Ellis & Jacen Burrows) Presenting a cross between Doc Savage, The Shadow, and The Spider. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

Bongo Comics

Heroes Anonymous 6 (of 6; various) Contains Nazis with very bad judgment, drunk librarians, peanut butter and pastrami sandwiches, and an aborted poi fight. Mature readers. b&w .. $2.99

Radioactive Man 199 (various) It's 1971, and far across the galaxy one truly evil overlord is bent on conquering Radioactive Man's Zenith City. .. $2.99

Simpsons Comics 100 (various) When Bart discovers that he and the rest of Springfield have been the subjects of a hundred comic books, he goes on a scavenger hunt for all the issues he can find. 100pg $6.99

Cartoon Books

Bone Vol 5: Rockjaw Master of the Eastern Border (Jeff Smith; hbk) Follow the adventures of the three Bone cousins – Fone, Phoney, and Smileyas they strike out from Boneville to find their destiny. $23.95

Claypool

Elvira 139 Elvira's pal Gardenia's stage musical is threatened until a spell enables Elvira to give the lead role her own spin. b&w $2.50

Soulsearchers 69 (Peter David & John Heebink + Al Milgrom) The Soulsearchers have been experiencing a confusing time: they've had seven of their friends kidnapped, run afoul of a malicious demon family, and been tripping over Woodstarkes. How are these coccurrences tied together? b&w $2.50

Drawn & Quarterly

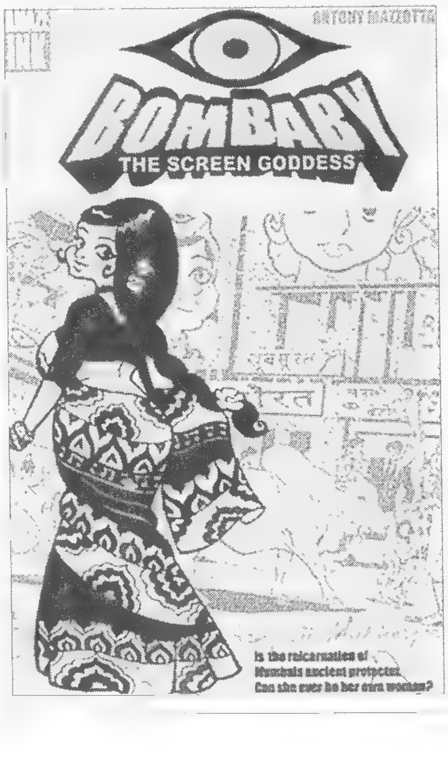
one-shot **Above & Below: Two Tales of the American Frontier** (James Sturm) Before his breakthrough book, The Golem's Mighty Swing, James Sturm produced two bold, remarkable short novellas set in different periods on the American frontier. Here they are. Mature readers. 80pg b&w $9.95

new **Or Else** 1 (Kevin Huizenga) Huizenga starts off this issue with a selection of features from Supermonster, including the breathtaking Chinese landscape story and the first appearance of Glenn Ganges. Mature readers. b&w .. $3.50

Dreamwave

Killzone 1 (John Ney Rieber & Travel Foreman) A galactic peace is shattered when the brutal Helghast mount an overwhelming assault on

close-up


ANTONY MAZZOTTA
BOMBABY
THE SCREEN GODDESS
Is the reincarnation of Mumbai's ancient protector. Can she ever be her own woman?

Bombaby

Amaze Ink

Writer/Artist: Antony Mazzotta

You may have heard about her in the western press, or you may have caught her name drifting through a remote Himalayn village. Reports of Bombaby: The Screen Goddess have been common fodder in recent months. So now's your chance to meet Sangeeta. She may be the reincarnation of India's ancient protector, but can she be her own woman? 140pg $13.95

ON SALE NOVEMBER

the colonies of the Interplanetary Strategic Alliance. $2.95

Pat Lee's Transformers/G.I. Joe 2 (James McDonough & Adam Patyk + Pat Lee) The secrets of G.I. Joe and Cobra's pasts are revealed as the greatest arms race in history intensifies, blazing a path across the world. $2.95

Transformers: Energon Vol 2 Pocket Book (Simon Furman & Guido Guidi) Collecting issues #23-26. The Transformers wage an all or nothing battle for control of the Earth! 112pg ... $10.95

Transformers Energon 29 (Simon Furman & Alex Milne) Megatron's back – and this time in three solid dimensions, packing more Energon-enhanced might than a whole army of Terrorcon clones. $2.95

Transformers Generation One: More Than Meets the Eye Official Guidebook Vol 2 (James McDonough + Adam Patyk & various; tpbk) Collecting issues #5-8 of the series! Classic Transformers favourites, plus profiles of lesser-known stars. 264pg $24.95

one-shot **Transformers/G.I. Joe Vol 1 Pocket Book** (John Ney Rieber & Jae Lee) The year is 1939 and a twisted alliance between a hate-crazed dictator and a ruthless general has left Europe in flames, in chains. 160pg b&w ... $9.95

Transformers: Generation One 11 (James McDonough + Adam Patyk & Don Figueroa) The hot-tempered cavalier Hot Rod finds himself in over his head when a mysterious group of Transformers-like warriors interferes with a standard transfer mission.$2.95

Transformers: The War Within Vol 3 (Simon Furman & Joe Ng) Desperate to uncover the secret of Megatron's boundless army and his newfound power, the remaining rag-tag band of Autobot insurgents attempt to extract and study one Clone Warrior from the dread Aerospace Extermination Squadron. $2.95

Fantagraphics

Belly Button 2 (Sophie) Sophie spotlights herself again in a series of autobiographical vignettes that find her moving from Paris to Berkeley, not to mention falling in love! Mature. . $4.95

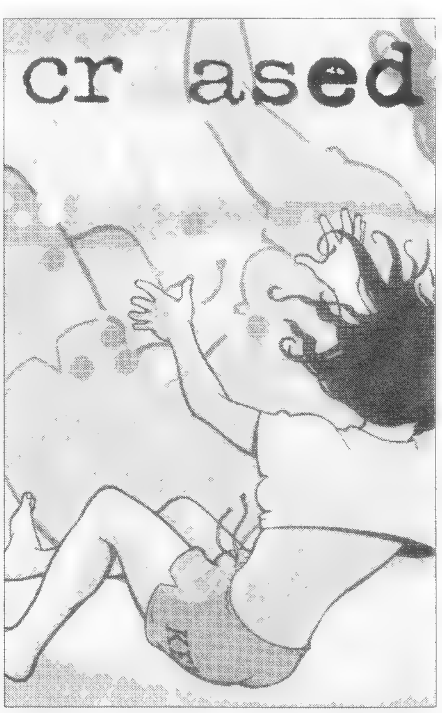
one-shot **Holy Moly** (Leah Hayes) Slacker illustrations from Hayes, drawn at a time when she should have been paying attention in class. Mature readers. 40pg b&w $4.95

one-shot **King Collected Edition** (Ho Che Anderson; graphic novel) Collects Anderson's entire biography of the renowned civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. Mature. 240pg $22.95

one-shot **Krazy & Ignatz 1933-1934: Necromancy By the Blue Bean Bush** (Ed. Bill Blackbeard & Derya Ataker; tpbk) The fifth in a series reprinting George Herriman's early 20th Century comic strip masterpiece. Most of these strips have not seen print since originally running in Hearst newspapers over 70 years ago. 120pg b&w $14.95

Love & Rockets Vol 2 #12 (Los Bros Hernandez) Julio's brother, Benjamin, returns from fighting the Japanese in the Philippines – with a Japanese wife. Mature readers. b&w $4.50

one-shot **The Mystery of Wolverine Woo-Bait** (Joe Coleman) Originally published in 1982 in an ultra-limited self-published edition, this new edition also includes the ultra-rare six- page short story, Highway. Mature readers. b&w 40pg $4.95



close-up

Creased

Image Comics

Writer/Artist: Daniel Miller

An all-new graphic novel about life, love, and how both can go horribly wrong. You know, people, often in our lives we go left, only to discover later that we should really have gone right. Creased presents a thoughtful exploration of just a few of the things that can go wrong while we're busy striving towards that ever-elusive 'perfect' relationship. 104pg b&w $9.95

ON SALE NOVEMBER

one-shot **What're You Lookin' At?** (Johnny Ryan) Several stories featuring Johnny Ryan's signature creation, Loady McGee (and straight-man Synus O'Gynus), a misanthropic, acne-scarred hustler who finds himself in scams that would make Wimpy proud. Mature readers. 176pg b&w $16.95

Image Comics

new **American Flagg!** Vol 1 & 2 (Howard Chaykin; tpbk) In 2031, chaos is the new world order. Worldwide nuclear and chemical conflict, environmental disasters and nationalism have driven the United States government to the relative safety of the planet Mars. The first trade paperback collects issues #1-6, with the second featuring #7-12. 192pg $19.95

one-shot **American Flagg! The Definitive Collection** (Howard Chaykin; hbk) Featuring all the materials in the first two trade paperbacks, plus additional cover paintings and promotional pieces. $49.95

Battle of the Planets: Princes 2 (of 6; David Wohl & Wilson Tortosa; *Top Cow)* Deep in the Himalayas, the G-Force team must battle the Charioteers of Changu – and to make matters worse, Princess is missing in action! 24pg b&w $2.99

new **Cholly and Flytrap** 1 (of 3; Arthur Suydam) In a futuristic Road Warrior-esque world, society has broken down, and only a few cities are clinging to civilisation – by a thread. In one of these outposts, Centre City, Cholly and Flytrap, wisecrack their way through danger as if they were stars of a 1950s gangster movie. $4.95

one-shot **Common Grounds** (various; tpbk; *Top Cow)* Here is Common Grounds, where superheroes and villains kick back in their off-hours. Thirteen tales of triumph and tragedy are here lavishly illustrated. 144pg $19.99

one-shot **Creased** (Daniel Miller; graphic novel) *See Close-Up, above.*

The Darkness 17 *(Hell House* 1 of 4; David Lapham & Brian Denham + Matt Milla; *Top Cow)* Jackie Estacado checks into an Atlantic City casino gone horribly wrong, where he encounters mobster menaces aplenty, and the true depths of his powers – and his soul. $2.99

new **Burglar Bill** 1 (of 6; Paul Grist) It's Police Constable Stephen Hill's first night on the beat, and he's finding out that the day-to-day drudgery of police work doesn't quite live up to the excitement of the police programs he watched when he was growing up. b&w 40pg $2.95

new **The Detonator** 1 (Mike Baron & Mel Rubi + Barbara Kaalberg) The Detonator takes out Grindcorps' headquarters. Escaping via paraglider, he lands on a sampan, drawing Lily Ling into his life. Frank then returns to Montana, pursued by Mangelbaum, a deadly assassin and explosives expert, and McGill Green, a suspicious Oakland cop. 48pg .. $2.50

one-shot **Firebirds** (Jay Faerber & Andres Ponce) For years, Rebecca Reed, aka Firebird, kept her secret identity from her teenage daughter, whom she hid at a boarding school, far from her enemies. But now the secret's out. 48pg .. $5.95

one-shot **Firebreather: The Iron Saint** (Phil Hester & Andy Kuhn) Duncan's class trip to Europe should be an exciting diversion from his troubled home life, but when he sets foot on British soil, ancient forces stir and an unstoppable armoured giant begins a rampage that can only end with Duncan's death. 48pg $5.95

Forsaken 4 (Carmen Treffiletti & Kristian Donaldson + Nick Zagami) Pressure mounts as the signing of the treaty is days away and the team cannot conjure a solid lead – or even keep one alive. $2.95

The Gift 8 (Raven Gregory & Cristina Lopez + Jason Keith) A struggling writer comes to a crossroads in his life. What will he sacrifice to attain his lifelong dream? $2.99

The Gift Vol 1: Choices (Raven Gregory & various; tpbk) This volume features the beginning journeys of the Ancient One and offers up the first clues to the mystery of his gifts. Collects The Gift #1-6. 144pg $14.95

Invincible 19 (Robert Kirkman & Ryan Ottley) Machine Head was the king of the supervillain underworld for years. Now, with the help of villain-turned-hero Titan, Invincible is almost single-handedly taking down the most powerful crime boss the world has ever seen. $2.95

Kane Vol 4: Thirty-Ninth (Paul Grist; tpbk) Detective Kane returns to active duty with the New Eden Police Dept following a six-month suspension in the wake of shooting and killing his partner, Dennis Harvey. 200pg b&w $16.95

one-shot **Magdalena/Vampirella** 1 (Robert Kirkman & Francis Manapul + Brian Buccellato; *Top Cow)* The Magdalena, the warrior/protector of the Catholic Church, must retrieve an all-powerful mystical relic. But the relic is the only thing that can cure Vampirella of her blood lust once and for all. .. $2.99

one-shot **Ministry of Space** (Warren Ellis & By Chris Weston + Laura Martin; tpbk) *See Close-Up on following page.*

Noble Causes 5 (Jay Faerber & Fran Bueno + Ron Riley) Invincible drops by to help Doc out of a jam. But how will Doc feel about being shown up by some young punk? $2.95

one-shot **Ring of Roses** (Das Petrou & John Watkiss + Mike Mclester; tpbk) The Church rules England with an iron hand but has begun to lose its grip. Times are tense. Then six high-powered priests are brutally murdered on the Thames. Samuel Waterhouse, the flamboyant barrister hired to investigate, soon realises he is out of his depth. 144pg b&w $12.95

Rising Stars 23 *(Phoenix in Ascension* 2 of 3; J. Michael Straczynski & Brent Anderson + Brian Buccellato; *Top Cow)* Ravenshadow becomes President of the United States, but his enemies have had enough of the Specials. $2.99

Rob Zombie's Spook Show International 12 (Rob Zombie & various) Suzi-X brings out the best in her assets. But El Superbeasto doesn't care, as he continues working his way through monster baddies and hot babes. Mature readers. $2.95

Savage Dragon 120 (Erik Larsen) Candidates on the right and left are astounded to find that a write-in campaign for Savage Dragon has yielded amazing results! $2.95

one-shot **Small Gods** (Jason Rand & Juan E. Ferreyra) Bobby Pope is a con man and petty criminal. He's also a psychic. He can't lose, until he crosses paths with a group of narcotics officers with more on their minds than catching criminals. b&w $2.95

Tales of Tellos 2 (of 3; Todd Dezago + Ciro Tota & Bruno Bessadi + Mauricet) *The Mage of Shades* reveals where the legendary Thomastharustra was during Jarek's final confrontation with the dread Malesur. $3.50

one-shot **Tokyo Knights Original** (Robert Place Napton & various; graphic novel; *Top Cow)* Kenny is a restless youth in Tokyo2, a sprawling, mysterious mega-metropolis. He falls in with a fast-moving, thrill-seeking crowd, and meets the beautiful Sharon. But Sharon has a secret. 128pg b&w $9.99

Tomb Raider 48 *(Gathering Storm* 3 of 3, James Bonny & Eric Basaldua + Jay Leisten; *Top Cow)* Lara Croft has found an ally in her quest to locate the ancient artifact known as the Rapture. She is the Magdalena $2.99

Ultra 4 (of 8; Jonathan + Joshua Luna & Jonathan Luna) Spring city's most famous superheroine may have fallen for Spring City's most ordinary guy. For a man seeking excitement in a mundane existence and a celebrity yearning for normalcy in a superficial business, their meeting seems written in the stars. $2.95

The Walking Dead 14 (Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard) With the zombies cleared out, Rick and crew settle into their new home. It's secure, safe and stocked with everything they need. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Witchblade 81 *(Witch Hunt* 2 of 5; Ron Marz & Michael Choi + Brian Buccellato; *Top Cow)* Sara Pezzini has awakened from her coma, but with no memory of what happened to her. So like any good cop, she starts digging for clues. $2.99

Oni Press

one-shot **Awakening** (Neal Shaffer & Luca Genovese; graphic novel) Francesca, the only child of an affluent family, is excited to be attending a prestigious boarding school. Unfortunately, shortly after her arrival, she finds one of her classmates brutally murdered, the trauma leaving her mute. Mature readers 112pg b&w $9.95

Blue Monday Vol 2: Absolute Beginners (Chynna Clugston-Major; tpbk) It's the second mini-series, in one volume. Things start off bad as a costume party goes all wrong, and the brain-damaged, hormonally-challenged boys videotape Bleu in the bath. Mature readers. 128pg b&w $11.95

one-shot **Killer Princesses** (Gail Simone & Lea Hernandez; tpbk) Faith, Hope, and Charity, the girls of the mysterious Sorority, are back in this new collection. Mature readers 96pg b&w $9.95

one-shot **Kissing Chaos: Sweet Nothings** (Arthur Dela Cruz) Ashley and Everett have come a long way since the events of Nonstop Beauty, but have they come far enough? Mature readers. $3.50

Kissing Chaos Vol 2: Nonstop Beauty (Arthur Dela Cruz; tpbk) Ashley has received a mysterious email that has her standing in hot water between mysterious men in black and an online stalker. Mature. 168pg b&w $11.95

one-shot **Last Exit Before Toll** (Neal Shaffer & Christopher Mitten + Dawn Pietrusko; graphic novel) Stranded in Virginia Charles slowly begins to realise that this accident may just be his chance at a new life. Mature. 96pg b&w $9.95

Ojo 4 (Sam Kieth & Chris Wisnia) Ojo's appetite seems to grow with every meal, leaving little Annie wondering what to feed him next. But even as the beastie's hunger rises, so do Annie's problems at home. Mature readers. b&w $2.99

new **Scott Pilgrim Vol 1: Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life** (Bryan Lee O'Malley; graphic novel) Everything's fantastic for Scott Pilgrim until a seriously mind-blowing, dangerously fashionable, rollerblading delivery girl named Ramona Flowers starts cruising through his dreams and sailing by him at parties. Mature readers. 168pg b&w $11.95

Sirius

Dogwitch 14 (Daniel Schaffer) The video recording of the Vile Ettes rock concert holds a secret, perhaps one that may answer Violet's ultimate panging question: who exactly was responsible for the violent death of Bluebell, and why? Mature readers. 24pg b&w$2.95

one-shot **Poison Elves Dark Wars Vol 1: Heavens Devils** (Drew Hayes; tpbk) When Lusiphur and Jace gave up the criminal lifestyle, they enlisted as an Elvin lord's personal agents. Mature readers. 24pg b&w $15.95

Poison Elves Hyena 3 (Keith Davidsen & Scott Lewis) Exhaustion and delirium have nearly brought Hyena to her knees. Demon hordes swarm the village, kicking down doors to find her. Miles away but quickly closing, the vengeful wizard Vesper yearns to spill her blood. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Tokyopop

Tramps Like Us 3 (of 10; various; graphic novel) Sumire's got a new man named Hasumi in her life, but how successful can it be with a competitive girl in an adjacent office and the inability to express her own feelings? Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Battle Royale 10 (of 13; Koushun Takami & Masayuki Taguchi; graphic novel) As Shuuya comes to grips with the fact that he was unable to save the girls that rescued him; Yuko is pushed over the edge by the tragic deaths of her friends. Mature readers. 200pg b&w $9.99

Battle Vixens 5 (of 7; Yuji Shiozaki; graphic novel) Back at home and fully revived, Hakufu is now in possession of the legendary sword, the Hyakuhekitou. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Candidate for Goddess 5 (of 5; Yukiru Sugisaki; graphic novel) When Zero and the rest of the candidates progress to Class Two, Clay is faced with the possibility of expulsion. 192pg b&w $9.99

Comic Party 4 (of 4; Sekihiko Inui; graphic novel) When Asahi Sakuraithe lit chick who gave a poetry reading at Brother 2's booth returns to the comic scene, it turns out that she's really a famous voice actress and singer in disguise! 192pg b&w $9.99

Crescent Moon 4 (of 6; Haruko Iida; graphic novel) When Keiko learns of a possible connection between Mahiru and the Moon Light Bandits, she confronts Mahiru, going as far as branding her as an enemy and traitor. 192pg b&w$9.99

Culdcept 3 (of 4; Shinya Kaneko; graphic novel) While Najaran and her companions enjoy lunch in a quiet forest, the silence is soon broken by the thundering stampede of frantic forest critters and the twisted visage of a full-grown Woodfolk comes crashing into view. 192pg b&w $9.99

D.N.Angel 8 (of 8; Yukiru Sugisaki; graphic novel) Daisuke has a new enemy out to kill him and Dark is nowhere to be found. 192pg b&w (8 of 8) . $9.99

Diablo 2 (of 3; Kei Kusunoki & Kaoru Ohashi; graphic novel) When a little girl named Mio wants to save her brother from violent beatings, she turns to Ren and Rai to put an end to the brutality. Mature readers. b&w $9.99

Dragon Voice 2 (of 11; Yuriko Nishiyama; graphic novel) The battle of the boy bands hits a high note when The Beat Men invade the scene and start snatching up fans from Privee, the newest and hottest boy band. 192pg b&w $9.99

Et Cetera 3 (Tow Nakazaki; graphic novel) No good western can continue without a hearty brawl on top of a speeding train between a gun-crazed villain and a two-timing partner! 192pg b&w $9.99

Fruits Basket 6 (of 14; Natsuki Takaya; graphic novel) Delving into the recesses of Kyo's past, we find the Sohma trio returning home on a rainy day. There a mysterious man who has known Kyo for a long time meets them. 208pg b&w $9.99

Gravitation 9 (of 12; Maki Murakami; graphic novel) As Shuichi decides to debut in the US with XMR records, his relationships with Eiri and Reiji reach an impasse. 192pg b&w $9.99

Happy Mania 11 (of 11; Moyoco Anno; graphic novel) When Shigeta runs away to the hot springs she gets more than she bargained for – a marriage proposal from a young man named Tadashi, as well as getting suckered into being the proprietor of the springs! Mature readers. b&w $9.99

Initial D 15 (of 26; Shuichi Shigeno) Riding in on the tails of Tak's last victory, a mysterious Toyota MR2 pulls up with Tak's next opponent, Kai Kogashiwa. 192pg b&w $9.99

Instant Teen Just Add Nuts 2 (of 4; Haruka Fukushima; graphic novel) Now a top supermodel, Natsumi has photoshoots in the most exotic locales. But she never imagined that her next assignment would find her alone with Asuma on a desert island. 192pg b&w $9.99

Jing: King of Bandits – Twilight Tales 2 (Yuichi Kumakura; graphic novel) While attempting to dodge Bloody Caesar's brutal attacks, will the King of Bandits find a helping hand in order to get out of this mess in one piece? 196pg b&w $9.99

The Kindaichi Case Files 10 (of 11; Kanari Yozaburo & Sato Fumiya; graphic novel) A famous writer holds a code-breaking contest, and Hajime Kindaichi naturally rises to the literary challenge. 200pg b&w $9.99

King of Hell 8 (of 8; Ra In-Soo & Kim Jae-Hwan; graphic novel) When Young and Majeh join forces to fight One-Eye's zombie army, they soon realise that there's more to the army than meets the eye. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Love or Money** 1 (Sang-Eun Lee; graphic novel) Yenni is a feisty and cute 15-year-old girl who is so obsessed with money that she runs a profitable loan-sharking business at her school. 192pg b&w (1 of 5) . $9.99

Mahoromatic: Automatic Maiden 4 (of 7; Bunjuro Nakayama & Bow Ditama; graphic novel) After Ryuga decides to live on Earth as a human, he and a skeptical Slash duke it out. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Mouryou Kiden: Legend of the Nymphs** 1 (of 3; Tamayo Akiyama; graphic novel) In a land submerged in a thousand years of fog, demons and nymphs do battle. Until one day, the fated meeting of sworn enemies unravels an intricate love story and hurls Ayaka, the daughter of the deity Reiki, into a voyage of discovery and maddening love. 192pg b&w$9.99

new **Neck and Neck** 1 (Sun Hee Lee; graphic novel) Dabin Choi is the daughter of Seoul's most powerful crime boss, and daddy's little girl has the hots for Eugene, the son of one her father's friends. There's just one problem – Eugene isn't into Dabin. 192pg b&w $9.99

One 5 (of 11; Lee Vin; graphic novel) Scandal rocks the music industry when Jihae reveals the secret about why she dropped out of the scene only to hurl Eumpa's band into the spotlight! 192pg b&w $9.99

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Rave Master 12 (of 28; Hiro Mashima; graphic novel) As the battle with Demon Card escalates, things boil to a critical point when all attacks focus on Elie. Just as a fatal blow makes its way toward her, one member of the RAVE team will give everything he has to save her. 208pg b&w $9.99

Rebirth 11 (of 18; various; graphic novel) Before Rett and Kal can fully deal with Kalutika's otherworldly origins, Father Daniel brings some troubling news: The corrupt Cardinal Josimov charges Deshwitat's beloved Lilith and Kualutika's sister Danube of being witches. 192pg b&w $9.99

Rebound 11 (of 18; Yuriko Nishiyama; graphic novel) With the tournament over for Johnan, the team says goodbye to its fans, and then spends a day at the beach Johnan-style! 192pg b&w $9.99

Stone 2 (of 2; Sin-Ichi Hiromoto; graphic novel) Having just defeated one of the Empire's Elite soldiers to rescue Captain Suv, Zizi faces off against Imperial Commander Jango and his mighty warship. Mature. 192pg b&w $9.99

UK NEWSSTAND

DC Thomson

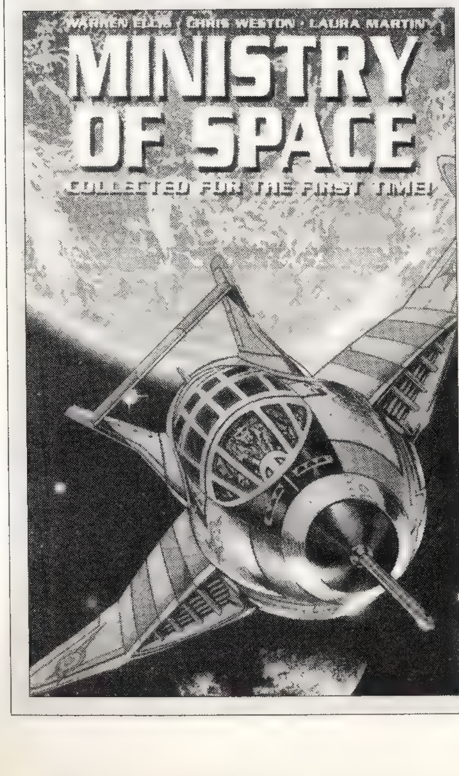
The Beano 3228-3231 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

Beano Superstars 153 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology. 36pg £0.65

Classics from the Comics 99 (various) Anthology reprinting classic cartoon strips from DC Thomson's vintage kids' comics Beano and Dandy. 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action And Adventure Stories 3718-3724 (eight per month; digest; various) Featuring one self-contained comic strip per issue. Some new material. 68pg b&w £1.00

Fun-Size Beano 163-164 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace, and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60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close-up

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Image Comics

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Artists: Chris Weston + Laura Martin

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Striker 64-67 (weekly; Pete Nash + various) Football comic starring ex-Sun newspaper Warbury Warriors. Two CGI drawn strips plus reprint of Billy's Boots, old Sun Striker strips and features. £1.50

Panini Comics

Action Man 116 (four-weekly; various) Action Man travels to central Africa on his latest adventure, to investigate some strange drumming noises in the heart of the Moujaff jungle!. 36pg £1.75

Astonishing Spider-Man 117 (four-weekly; various) Peter's doting aunt has finally learned that her frail nephew is Spider-Man. 76pg £2.40

Avengers United 46 (four-weekly; various) Continuing The Kang War epic, backed by a reprint from the Avengers archives. 76pg £2.40

Batman: Legends 13 (four-weekly; various) Batman receives a crushing, fatal defeat at the hands of Penguin. 76pg£2.40

Cartoon Network 80 (four-weekly; various) Your fave Cartoon Network characters, including Dexter's Laboratory, Johnny Bravo, Powerpuff Girls and loads more! Plus: free gifts, competitions and all the latest toon info. 52pg £1.75

Doctor Who Magazine 349 (four-weekly; Gray & various) Marvel UK's longest running title. Includes articles, interviews and news on the forthcoming BBC series. 52pg £3.40

Essential X-Men 118 (four-weekly; Claremont + Morrison & various) Reprints the adventures of the New X-Men and Team X-Treme, with occasional X-related crossovers. 76pg £2.40

Mighty World of Marvel 21 (four-weekly; various) Classic anthology, featuring Miller and Janson's Daredevil, Thomas and Trimpe's Hulk, plus Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD by Steranko. 76pg £2.40

Scooby Doo 18 (four-weekly; various) Regular vanquishing of baddies who "would have done it if it weren't for those pesky kids" guaranteed. Also contains competitions, activities, quizzes and more! 36pg £1.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 107-108 (three-weekly; various) Title for younger readers, with games, posters and an original UK strip featuring classic Spidey villains. 36pg £1.50

Tom & Jerry 81 (four-weekly; various) Comic strip stories featuring probably the world's most well known cartoon duo, plus free gifts, puzzles, games, drawing and posters. 36pg £1.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 35 (four-weekly; Bendis & Hairsine + Miki) A double helping of Ultimate Six, featuring The Ultimates and a clutch of Spidey's deadliest foes. 52pg £1.95

Ultimate X-Men 21 (four-weekly; Millar & Finch) The X-Universe re-imagined – everything you thought you knew about the X-Men is wrong! 52pg £1.95

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2000 AD #1414-1417 (various) Future lawman Judge Dredd races against time to find the bombers in *Total War* by John Wagner and Henry Flint, while alien Kilquo is tangled in a black ops conspiracy in *Faces* by John Higgins and Mindy Newell. $3.75

Judge Dredd Megazine 225 (various) Featuring Highland heat for Young Middenface and his mutant clansmen in *Killoden*. Also, The Simping Detective gets a new partner in *Innocence (A Broad)*. 100pg $10.99

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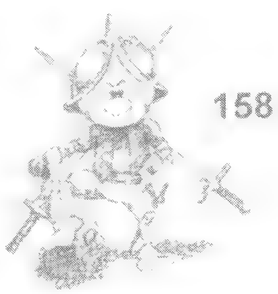

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front cover Tales of Terror

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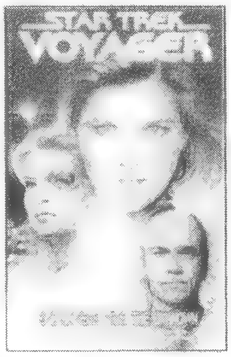

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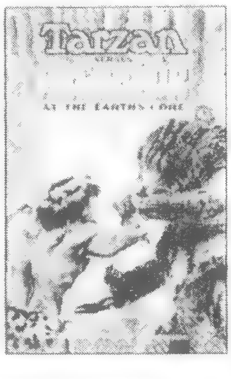

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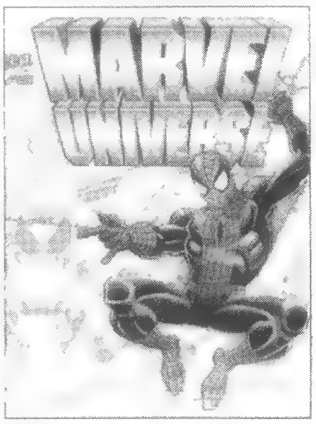

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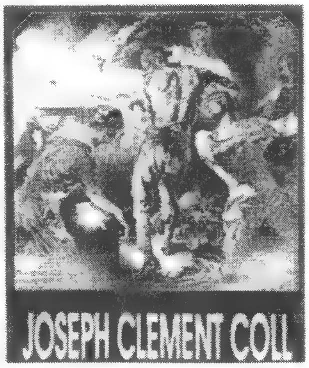

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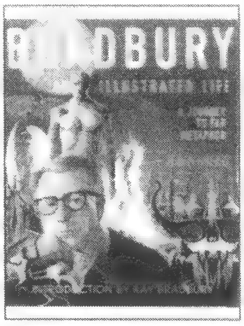

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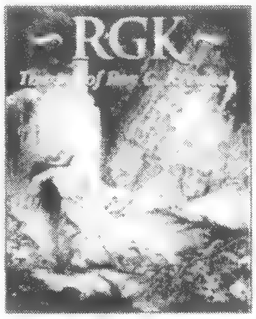

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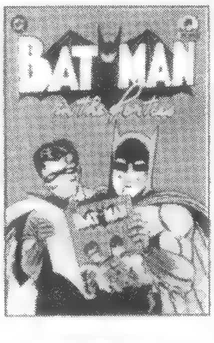

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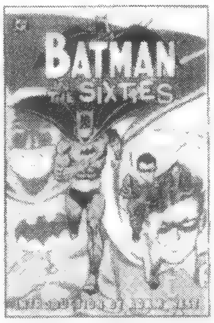

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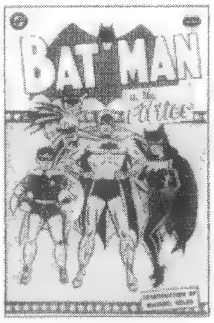

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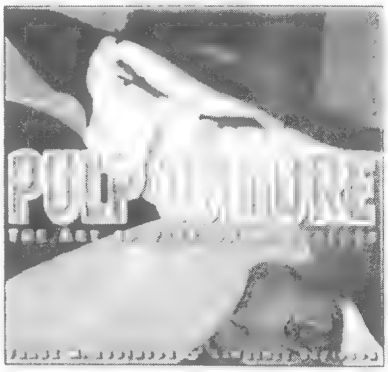

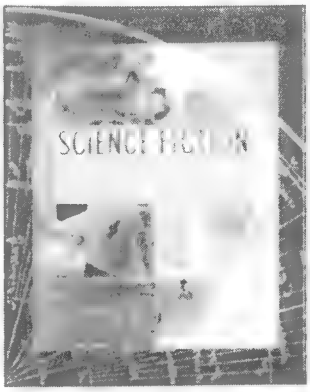

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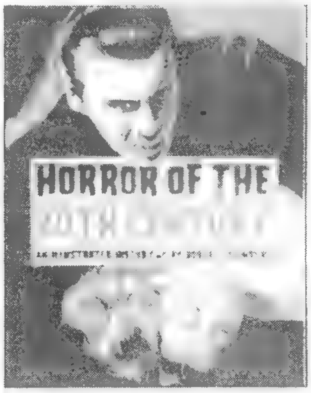

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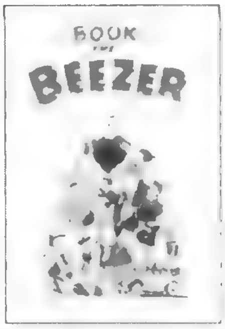

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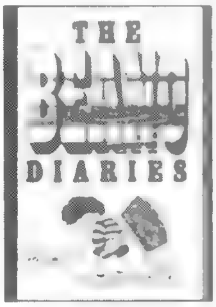

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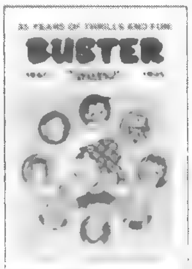

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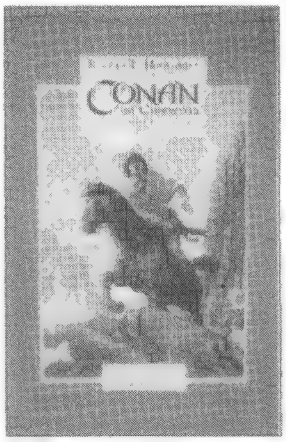

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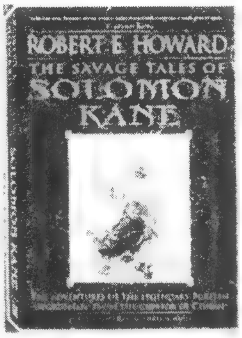

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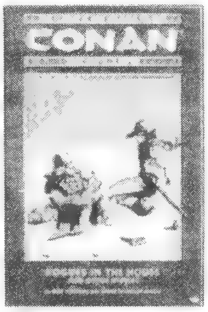

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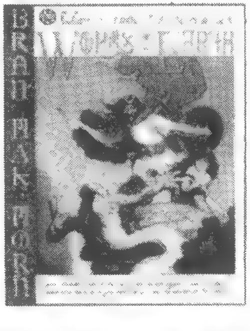

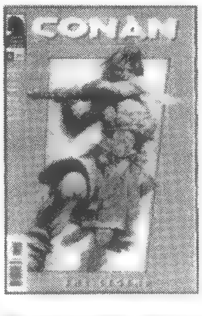

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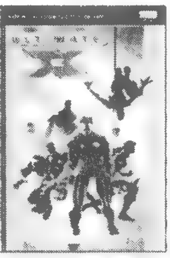

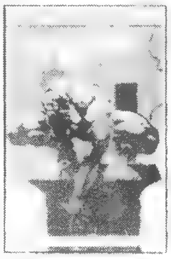

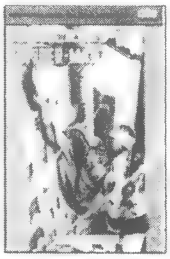

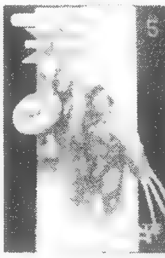

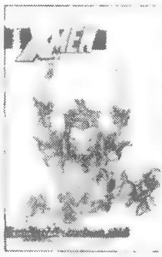

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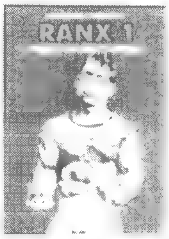

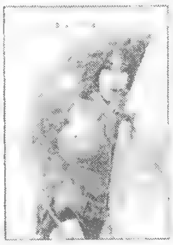

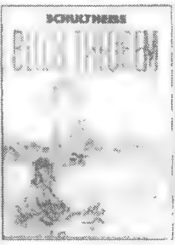

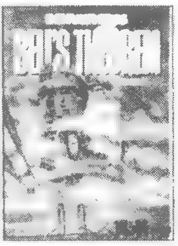

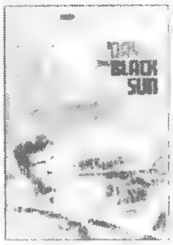

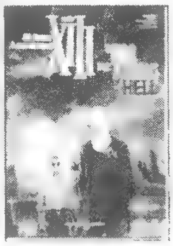

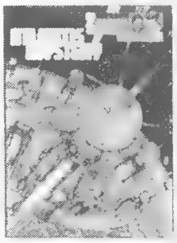

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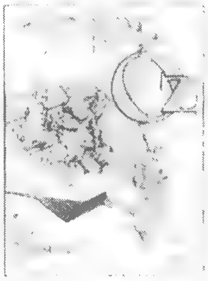

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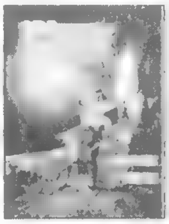

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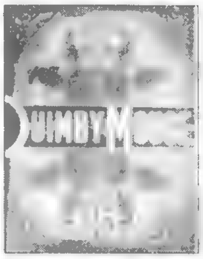

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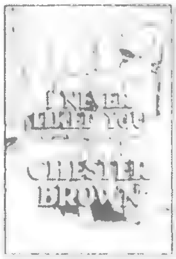

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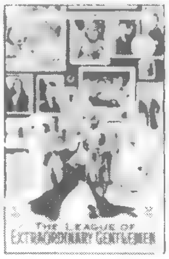

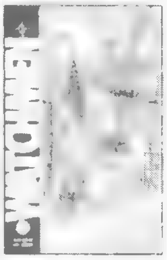

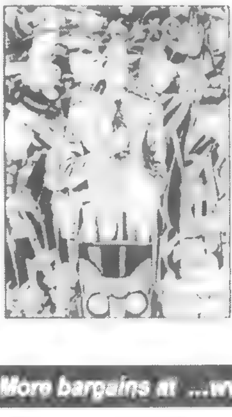

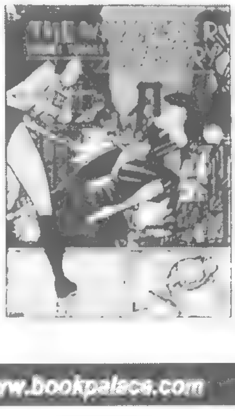

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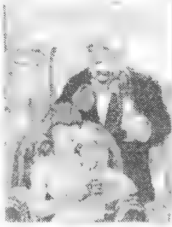

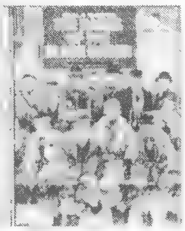
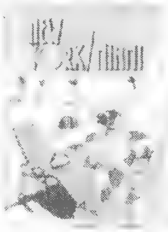
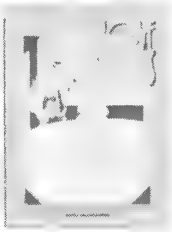
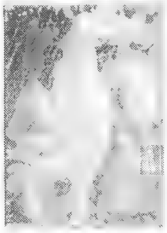
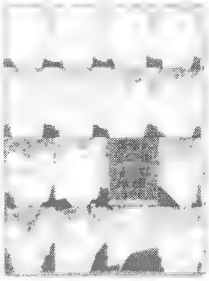
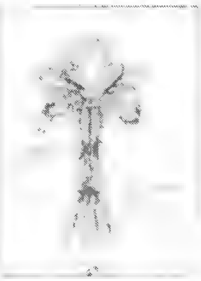

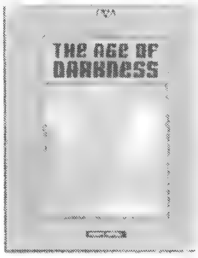

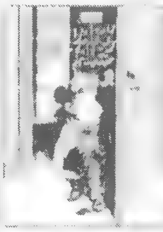

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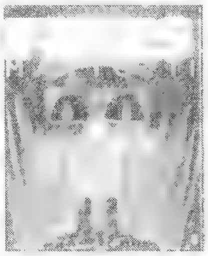

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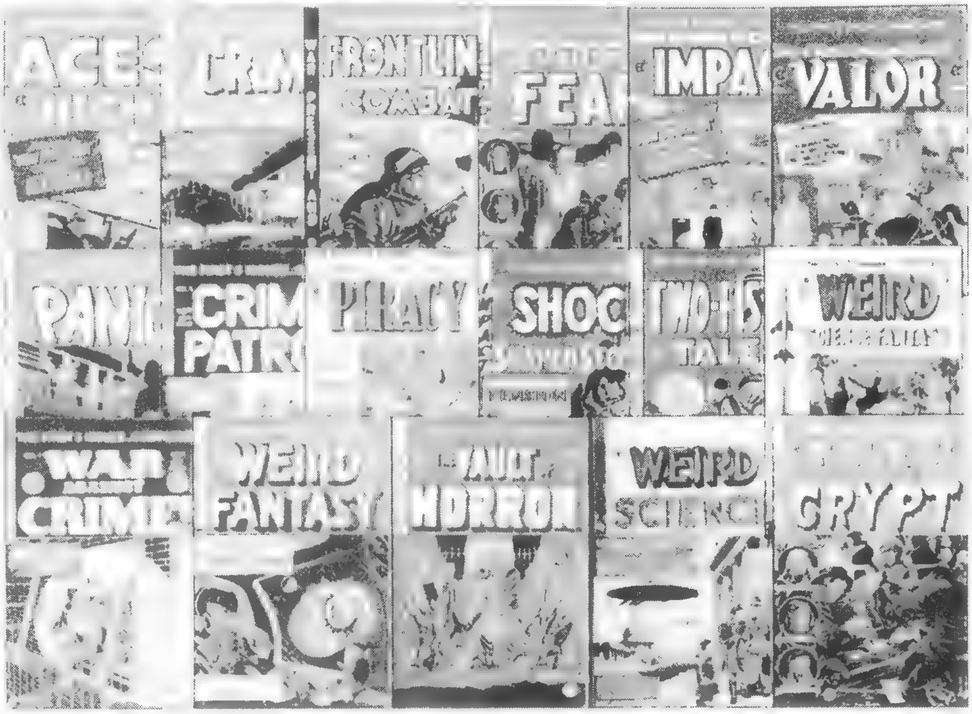

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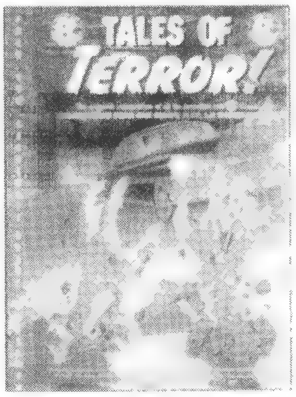

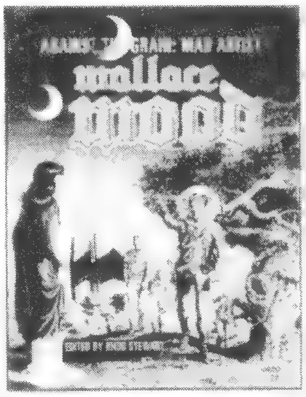

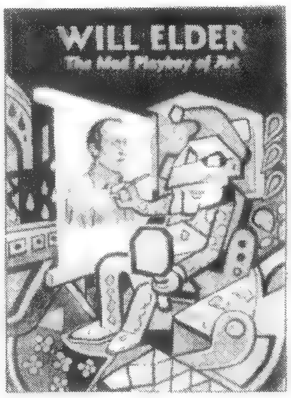

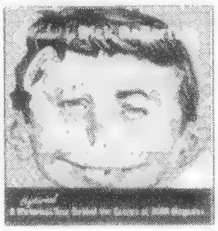

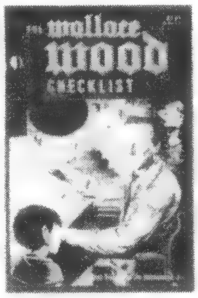

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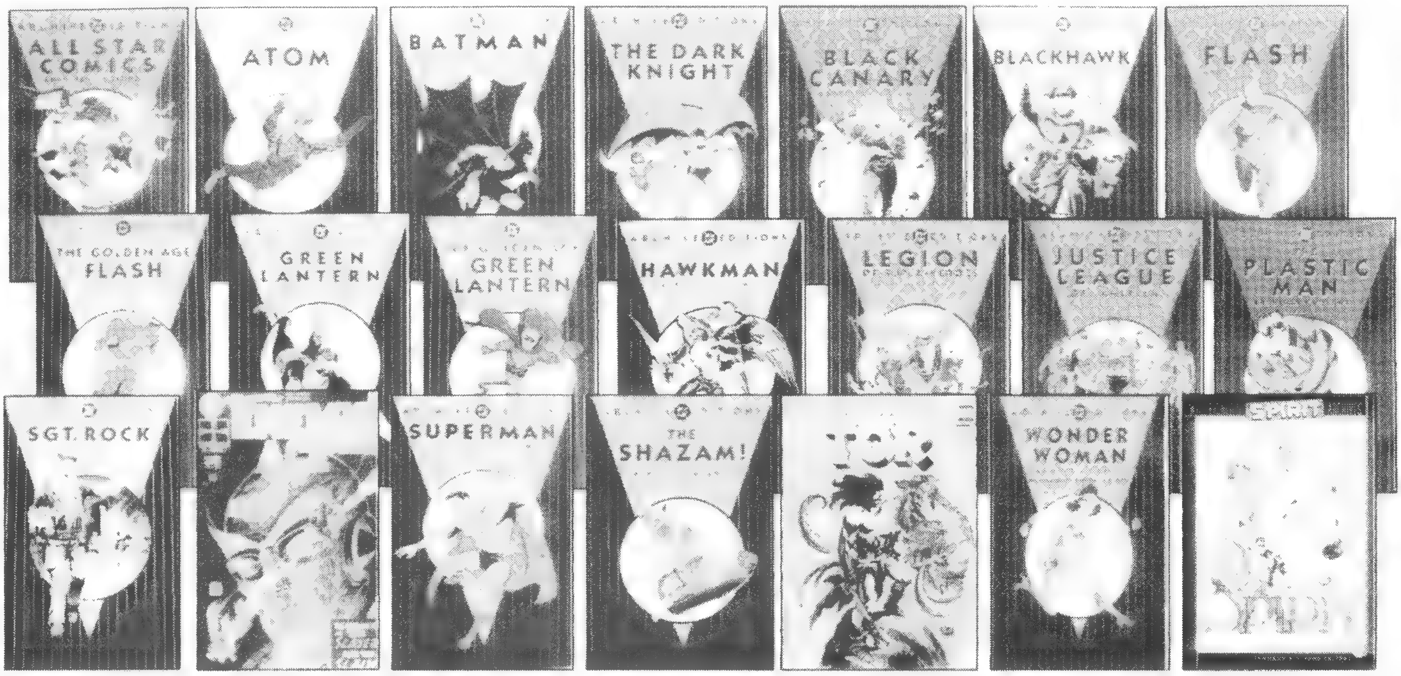

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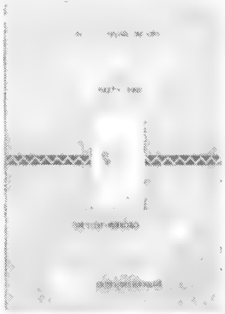

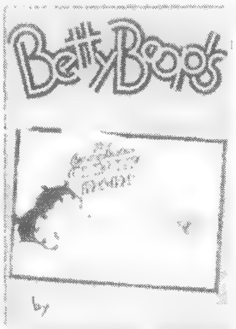

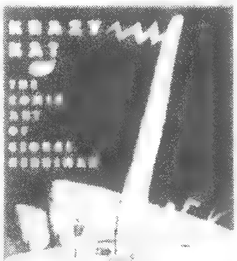

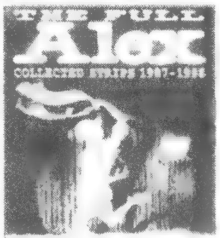

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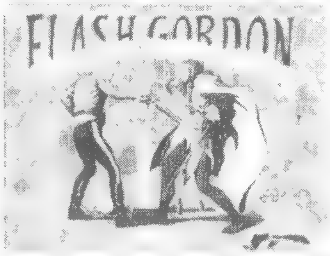

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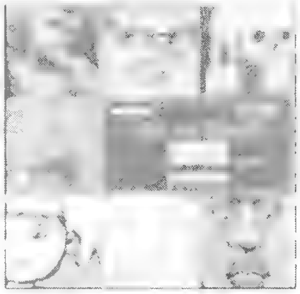

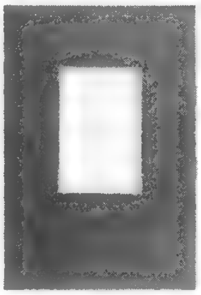

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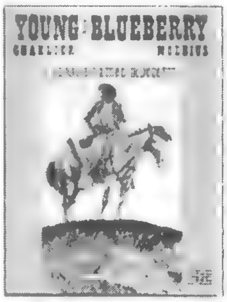

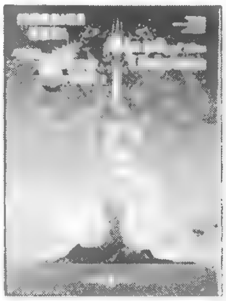

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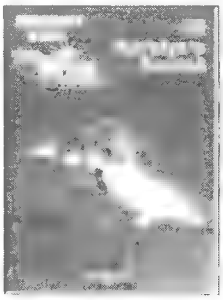

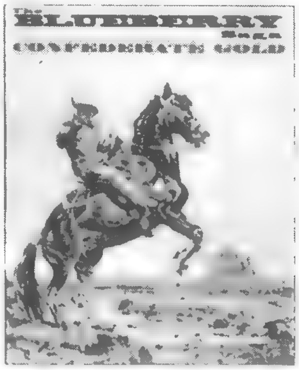

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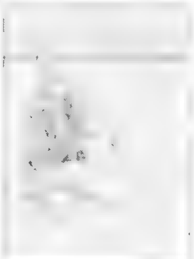

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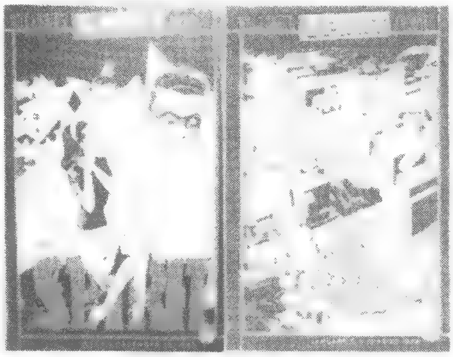

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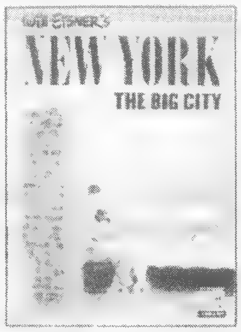

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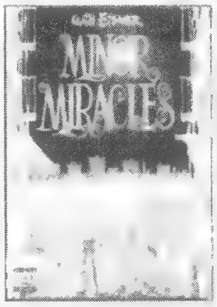

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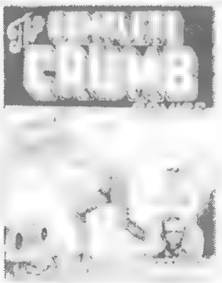

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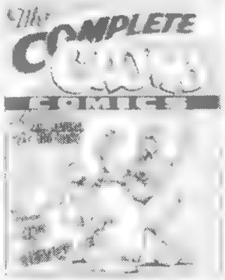

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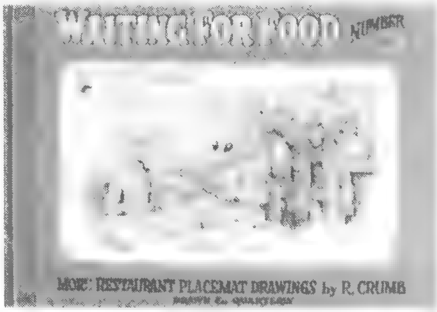

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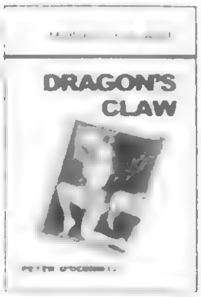

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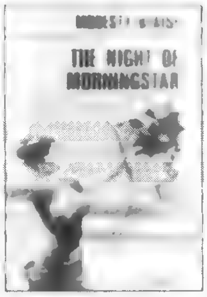

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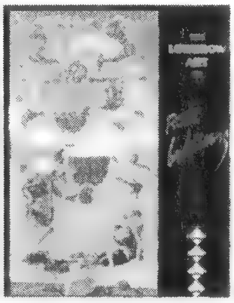

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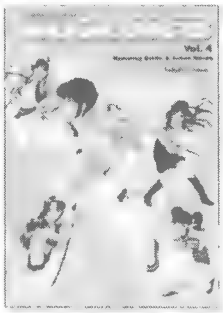

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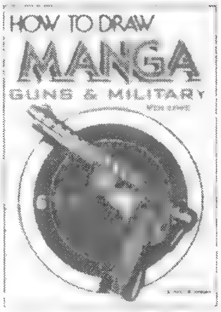

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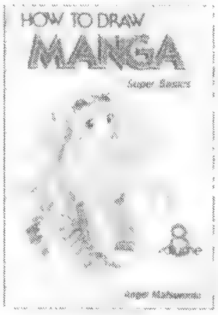

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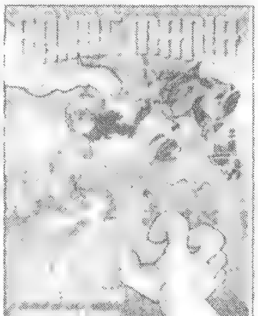

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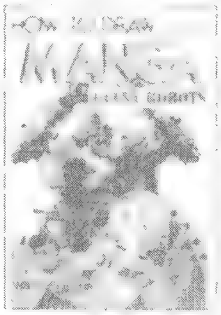

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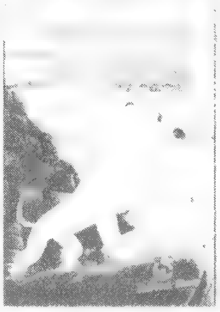

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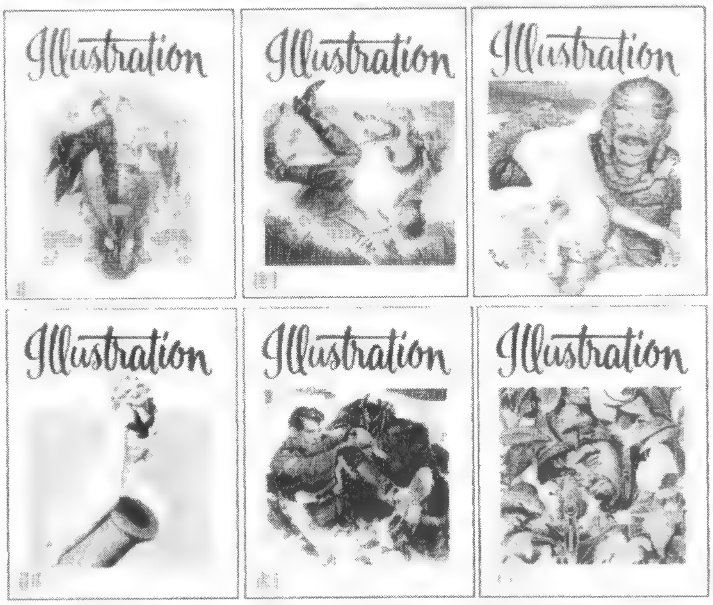

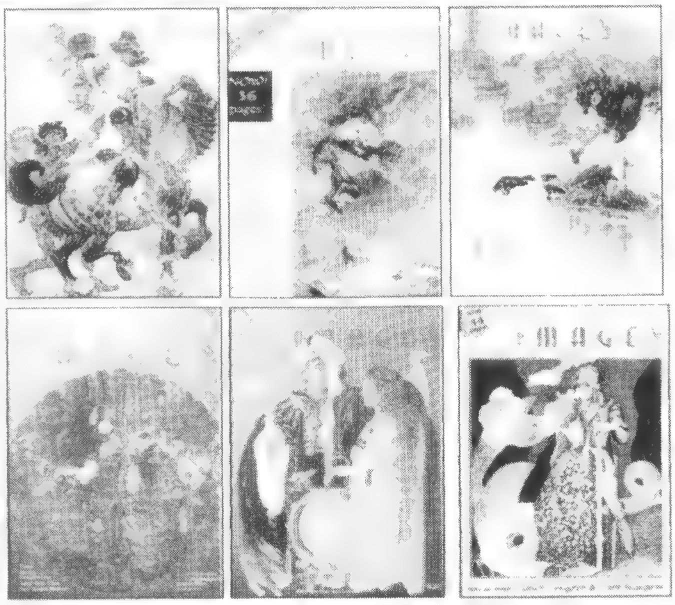

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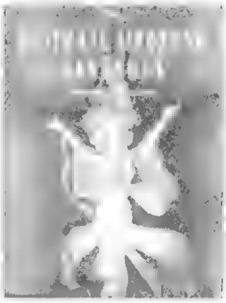

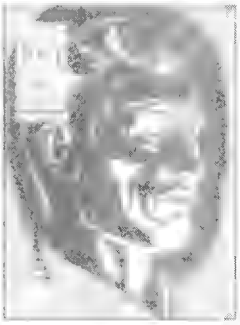

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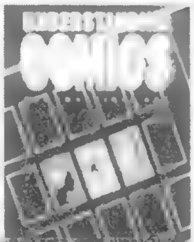

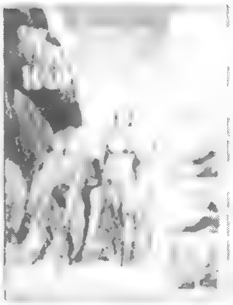

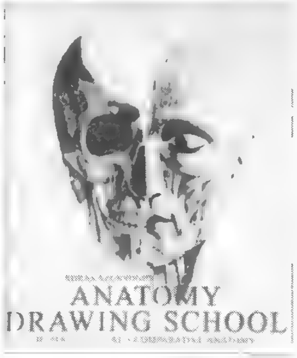

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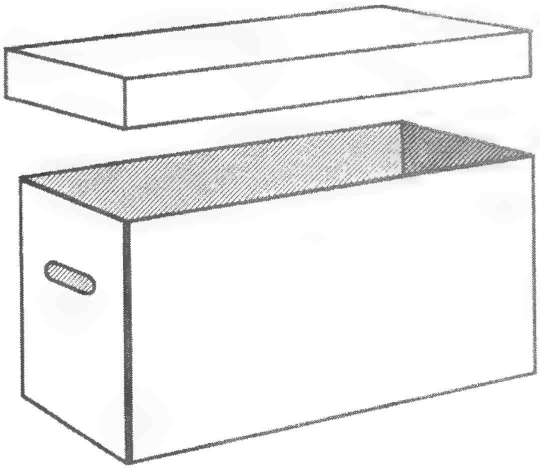

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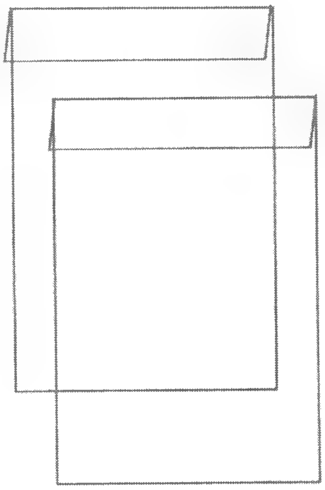

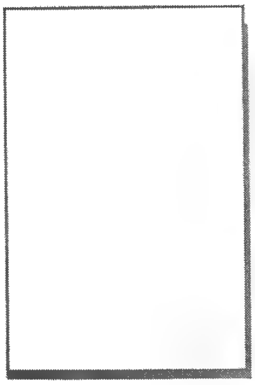

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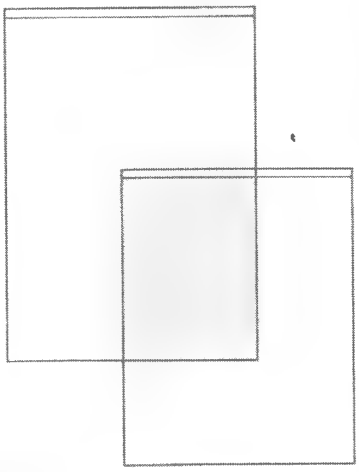

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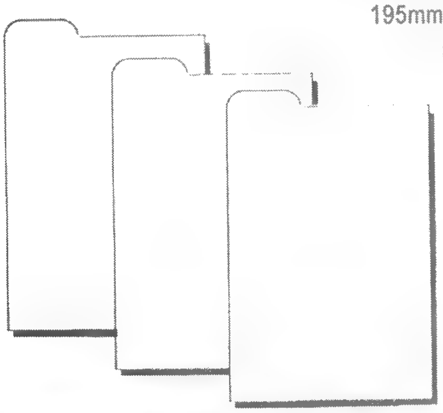

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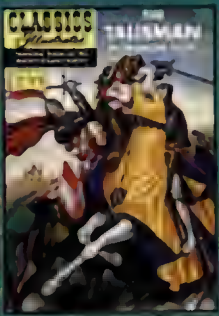
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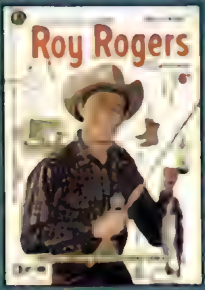

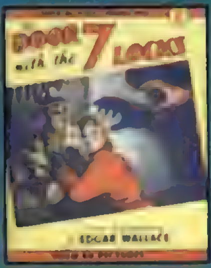
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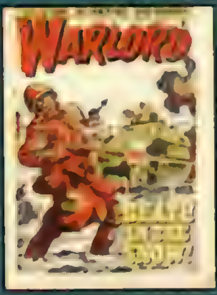

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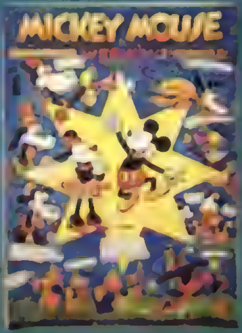
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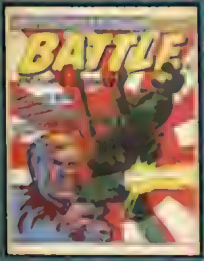

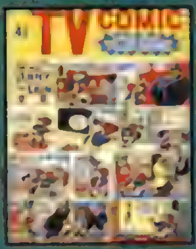

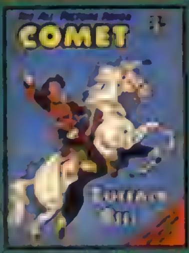
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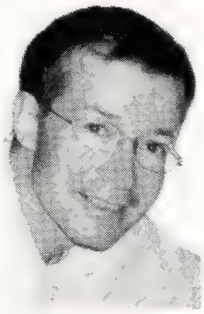


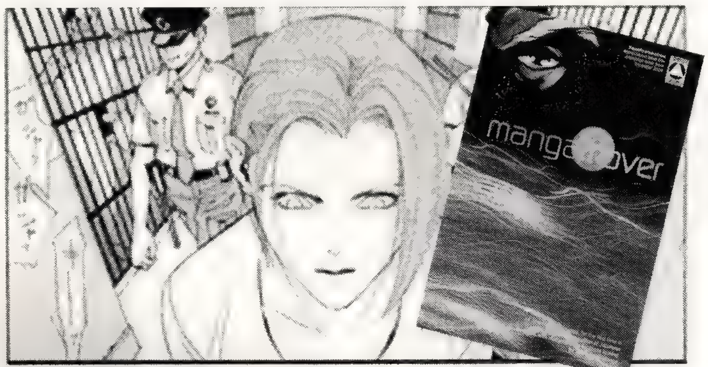
Manga-fication of the original US art form

Novel Graphics by Paul Gravett

Highlighting the latest and best in graphic novels

NONE OTHER than underground cartoonist Chester Brown drew the front cover of **The New York Times Magazine** for Sunday July 11th. In fact, he drew a comic strip, his second page continued inside, to accompany the headline *How Cool Is Comics Lit?*. I eagerly anticipated reading the 13-page lead article on the 'new' literary graphic novels, concentrating on the current American and Canadian canon by Spiegelman, Clowes, Ware, Seth, Sacco and Tomine.

By the end, however, much as I appreciated this high-profile and largely positive exposure, some of journalist Charles McGrath's sweeping assertions had dampened my enthusiasm. In particular, McGrath describes manga as "those Japanese comic books that feature slender, wide-eyed teenage girls who seem to have a special fondness for sailor suits".



*Above: From **Manga Mover**, detail from* Dinnertime *by Hisaki Sakurai.*

Shortly after, he advises his **Times** readers, "You can ignore all this stuff – though it's worth noting that manga sells like crazy, especially among women."

On the one hand, McGrath encourages the uninitiated to take an open mind and explore the sophistication of "comics lit", while at the same time he puts them off manga by dismissing Japan's entire comics culture in just two sentences.

For all the effusive praise heaped onto the North American artistes singled out here, the entrenched prejudices against comics are never that far away and are now redirected against those foreign, back-to-front titles invading America's bookstores.

I can understand why some people, including comics aficionados, choose to "ignore all this stuff". There is such a tsunami of the latest translations pouring in every week and such a relative lack of review coverage, even in this magazine, that it becomes a challenge to pick out manga that might appeal to you.

Several retailers and others have assured me that there really isn't much crossover between superhero fans and manga fans. You either like one or the other. Maybe it's not been helped by specialist shops now tending to display manga and comic books separately, not so much to be segregationist, more for the practical reason that they fit different sized shelving.

Why are they selling? For a start, do the maths. Three dollars buys you 20 something story pages in the average American comic book, say 15 cents a page. Or you could spend ten dollars and get up to 200 pages of story in a manga, around 5 cents per page, or one third of the price.

Admittedly, manga usually don't give you much if any colour, but the screen effects and washes can add a lot to black and white art. And manga tend not to use many panels on each page, but then neither do most US comics.

Increasingly, US comics publishers have realised they cannot afford to "ignore all this stuff", as sales of manga skyrocket year-on-year and the books attract lots of brand new readers, many of them young and female.

TokyoPop's market research found that no less than 70% of their readership consists of girls aged 11 to 17, an audience that, aside from Archie, American publishers had all but abandoned. They are seeing a fresh generation who are getting hooked on comics and may well stick with them into their 20s and beyond.

No wonder DC, Marvel, Oni, Salve Labor and others are adopting the 5 x 7", DVD-sized manga paperback to package their own material, even labelling it "manga", from **Elfquest** and **Strangers in Paradise** reprints to compilations by Andi Watson or Lea Hernandez. The "Manga-fication" of American comics has also gone beyond imitating a set of styles and techniques to commissioning Japanese writers and artists themselves to work directly for the US market.

Here in Britain, three independent outfits have entered the manga field recently. Stephen Robson of Fanfare is working with Spanish publishers Ponent Mon *(www.ponentmon.com)* to release their programme of sophisticated adult manga into English. Their latest release, **The Walking Man**, follows the detours and daydreams of a city dweller as he reconnects with the natural world, drawn in breath-taking detail by Jiro Taniguchi. I can't think of a better choice to show a **New York Times** sceptic how subtle and sublime Japanese comics can be.

At another extreme is Creation Books *(www.creationbooks.com)* which began with Suehiro Maruo's **Ultra-Gash Inferno** and next year releases its second manga in the "erotic-grotesque" genre, an avant-garde mix of porn, violence and horror with flourishes of the surreal.

Beauty Labyrinth of Razors excesses are not for anyone with a weak stomach, although surprisingly many of creator Jun Hayami's admirers are young women, who send him love letters, often with gifts of their used underwear to sleep with under his pillow.

The third such publisher is the relative newcomer Boychild Productions (www.boychildproductions.co.uk) which is headed by Scottish writer and film director Sean Michael Wilson, now based in Tokyo.

In the first issue of his 68-page anthology **Manga Mover** (in US comic book size), Sean introduces readers to four artists unknown in the West: Hisaki Sakurai, whose sequel to **The Ring** – adapted from the novel **Spiral** – is just out from Dark Horse Comics; biker grrrl Misako Rocks with her fusion of shojo or girls' manga and US autobio comix; Tomoko Amemiya and her cool serial thriller; and, on a story written by Sean, Juan Chavarriga – a manga-influenced Argentinian artist living in France, now there's living proof of manga's global reach.

To see and maybe even win all variety of manga, join me if you can when I talk on the subject at Bristol's *Comic Expo* at 2pm on Saturday, November 6th.

From Digital Manga's "boys love" gay romances for girls to ADV's **Apocalypse Meow** (Vietnam fought between bunnies and cats), you ignore manga at your peril – or at the risk of missing out on some wonderful stories and art!

PG tips

Here are more of my suggestions for some of the best upcoming graphic novels you might not have heard about, and websites to find out more:

AMERICAN SPLENDOR: OUR MOVIE YEAR
(Harvey Pekar & various artists; Ballantine Books)
December 2004............$16.95

It's been quite a year for opinionated Cleveland file-clerk Harvey Pekar with the movie version of his down-to-earth autobiographical comics bringing him fame, film awards and huge acclaim. From Sundance to Cannes, Pekar reveals his behind-the-screen experiences, illustrated by artists R. Crumb, Mark Zingarelli, Gary Dumm and others.
www.randomhouse.com/BB/

BOMBABY: THE SCREEN GODDESS
(Antony Mazzotta: Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor)
November 2004.............$13.95

With all the larger-than-life exuberance of Bollywood, this technicolor fantasy is actually 'made in America'.

Sangeeta Mukherjee is the spirited daughter of a respectable family in a male-dominated society, who learns she is the reincarnation of India's ancient protector goddess. Mazzotta takes us on her journey of self-discovery and independence. *www.bombaybaby.com*

KINGDOM OF THE WICKED
(Ian Edgington & D'Israeli: Dark Horse)
1 December 2004...........$15.95

A superstar children's writer finds himself trapped in the fairytale world he first created as a haven when he was a sickly child, except that it is now ravaged by war. Serialised years ago by Caliber in murky monochrome, this haunting 120-page allegory finally gets the quality colour printing it always deserved.
www.darkhorsecomics.com

MYTHOLOGY OF THE HEAVENS
(Hyun Se Lee; CPM Press)
November 2004...........$9.99

The violence and sexual content in this manhwa fantasy set in Korea's primordial past created a storm there in 1997, when the artist was prosecuted and fined for violating the *Youth Protection Law*, only to be eventually found not guilty.

Judge for yourself in his first volume, *God of War*, packing a chunky 328 pages.
www.cpmpress.com

ROAD TO PERDITION 2: ON THE ROAD
(Max Allan Collins & Jose Garcia Lopez/Steve Lieber/Josef Rubinstein; DC/Paradox Press)
3 November 2004.........$14.95

Not a prequel or sequel to the period gangster graphic novel, adapted into a movie by Sam Mendes, but a collection of three stories, set within the film during the six months when wanted hitman Michael O'Sullivan and his son are on the run. Masterful tales which expand and enhance your enjoyment of the original.
www.dccomics.com

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COMIX

Nice!

X-Men for X-Mas? Possibly not, no...

Talking Shop with Stephen Holland

Reminding people there's a real mainstream out there

MOST columns don't have cliff-hangers, I know, and I don't think this one's going to have you clawing your eyes out in an **Avengers** #500 sort of way, but it's at least a two-parter designed to help *you* choose Christmas presents, whilst spreading the word on comics.

"It's only October!!!"

Well yes, but if you, like me, can't contemplate the concept of shopping until the very last minute for your dearly beloveds – or that mouldy old Aunt you simply don't have a clue about – then that's what a Stanley Knife's for. No, *not* disembowelling your *Auntie* – for cutting out and keeping this column.

Let's start with the tricky people, those you don't know very well, or for whom you're tired of buying that revolting lavender soap. **Mutts** is the cheeriest crowd-pleaser in the business, being the best non-political syndicated strip since **Calvin & Hobbes** (and there's another target audience – fans of the now finished **C&H** strips), featuring a cat and a pup, and their own skewed world-view.

They're cute, they're beautifully drawn, and they think their owners are idiots. Everyone knows how to read four-panel gag strips, and almost everyone loves daft pets. With over ten to choose from (three in colour) this could keep you going for years.

French comics stalwart Lewis Trondheim came up trumps last year with **Mister O**. It's a simple recipe: take one page of paper, add sixty panels, put a man (circle for a body plus two stick arms, two stick legs, two dots for eyes and a line for a mouth) on the edge of a precipice, and watch him try to get over the chasm. Watch him fail, fall and die. Laugh out loud. Repeat 30 times and laugh even harder. Funnier as it progresses.

Equally useful on the universal level of appeal are **The Simpsons** creator Matt Groenig's **School Is Hell**, **Work Is Hell**, **Love Is Hell** etc., just recently released in the UK. Genius humour I've seen snatched up by all, dealing as they do with home truths which will make you cackle as you recognise your own personal traumas.

Ethel & Ernest by Raymond Briggs is next up. Most people are familiar with Briggs through **Fungus the Bogey Man**, but this is the adult-orientated biography of his parents, from the day they first met to the day his Father died. I've given this to my Ma, my stepmother and all their friends, and each of them reported back that it *was* their parents.

Briggs perfectly captures that particular generation and their era, making it a fascinating piece of social history as the couple get to bemused grips with things like the very first washing machines, '60s hippy culture and decimalisation. It's riotously funny in places, but please be warned: the last dozen pages are seriously devastating.

> **Fancy Froglin**: I can't tell you how many of these we've sold to late teens who stood smirking in the corner. Why are they smirking? It's about an anthropomorphic frog with a constant hard-on.

Moving on to *auto*biography, you could try **Maus**, but how about its natural successor, **Persepolis**, my favourite graphic novel from a couple of years ago. Both volumes are out now, and both are just as accessible as **Maus**, just as moving, and told in a similarly simple visual style. I hate worthy books – the sort you're *supposed* to read – so let me assure you this isn't one of them. It's the autobiography of Marjane Satrapi, who was but a toddler when the Islamic Revolution hit Iran.

As Marxists, her family had already suffered under the Czar. Now they're tested further under an even more restrictive regime, and I know this does sound "worthy" but it's actually a heart-warming display of family strength and resourcefulness (her father smuggles a poster of Kim Wilde into the country in the lining of his coat!), and everyone I've given the first book to was desperate to know what happened after Satrapi was sent to school in Vienna.

This year, they'll find out.

Okay, too serious? Here's more comedy and my killer for students: James Kochalka's **Fancy Froglin**. I can't tell you how many of these we've sold to late teens who stood smirking in the corner. Why are they smirking? It's about an anthropomorphic frog with a constant hard-on. Seriously. Cartoony and in colour, it spawned the excellent comics anti-censorship t-shirt, "I am wearing little pants to hide my genitals. It is the law!"

The biggest recent Christmas sellers here (other than, perhaps, Tim Burton's **Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy**) have been Dr Parsons' books **tony & me by georg bush** and its successor **this is war by georg bush**. Drawn in crayon as if by Dubya himself (including the legal bits at the front), they appear to have hit upon the public's mood *bull's-eye*. See Blair and Bush ridiculed for their mutual, romantic adoration, while George struggles with the English language. Explains everything, doesn't it? (Caution: although the pages look like they were drawn by a four-year-old, they're not for under the 16s, but my uncle, who's a very straight-laced businessman, was killing himself laughing.)

On a cuter but deceptively moving note, how about the first two issues of **Fluffy** by London's own Simone Lia? **Fluffy**'s the story of a little bunny who thinks her owner's her biological Dad. Gorgeous. Expresses equally the pressures of being a parent, and everyone's need to be loved. Fluffily. "Fluffy, I'm not your Daddy. No. I'm a man and you're a bunny." "Yes you are, Daddy. I'm *not* a bunny." You probably have to see the illustrations, but when she's distressed, she leaves droppings on the sofa.

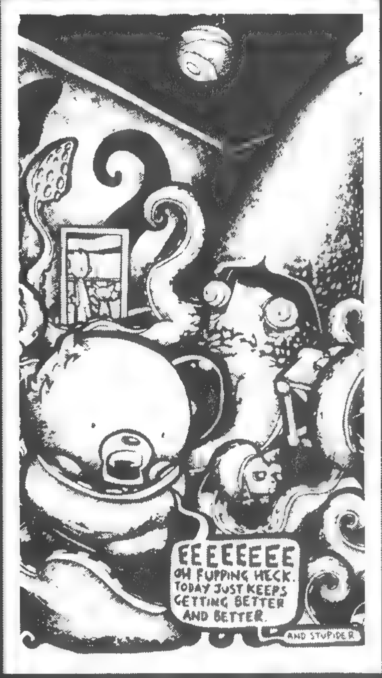
Next month, more of the same only different. Publishers please note: no amount of bribery will secure you a listing. These are comics tried and tested as presents to those who don't actually think they read comics.

Although I am very partial to champagne...

Stephen Holland runs Page 45 in Nottingham with Mark and Tom. Mister O paragraph adapted from Mark's original mailshot review.

Dave's
COMICS

new for october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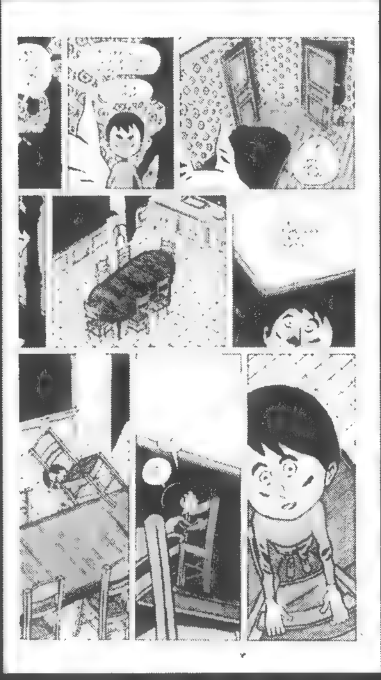

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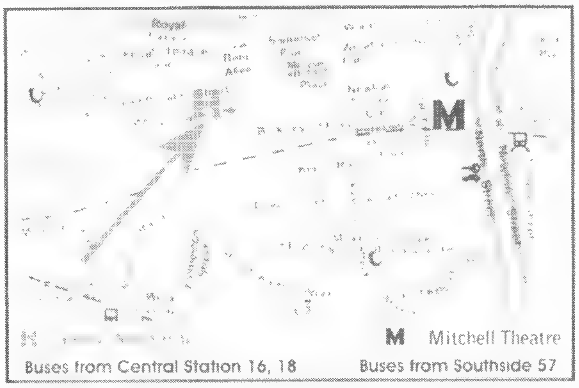

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Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry. As such, the following opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Submissions are edited only for grammar, clarity and brevity.

Comics junkie confesses all

Comment by Simon Cartmell via e-mail: simoncartmell@blueyonder.co.uk

I'VE BEEN reading and collecting comics for over 30 years (I started young) and although I've often been tempted to respond to various debates, this is the first time I could be bothered to actually take the time to do so.

"Comics are too expensive", "Dealers make too much money", "Why can't I sell my mint copy of **Sooperdooperfantastic-Man** #6 for guide price?", "But this is a HOT issue, there are only 20 copies in existence"...

Grow up! The cost of comics and their resale value is irrelevant to most ardent comic fans. You might whine and moan about it but you're already hooked, you're an addict, you will pay the price asked and damn the consequences.

Let me explain. Marvel UK started my downfall, **Spider-Man**, **The Avengers**, **Planet of the Apes**, you name it, from 1973 onwards I'd bought it, read it and kept it under my bed. **Star Wars**, **2000 AD**, **Starlord**, **Action**, the more comics on the market the more I bought, or more accurately at that time, the more I coerced members of my family into buying them for me once my limited pocket money had been spent.

Then one day in a local newsagent I discovered that the Marvel comics I loved so dearly were actually reproductions of far more glamorous full-colour American versions. I bought the same heroes, but in colour and for a while the newsagents were my dealers of choice.

However, I was fortunate (?) that living in Birmingham there were several comics shops near the city centre, most notably Nostalgia & Comics. Walls of heroes peered down at me, posters and displays of all the things I loved and even box after box of old comics starting from 10p each; the choice, the atmosphere, the smell... I'd found a little piece of Heaven!

From the age of 9 (it was a more innocent time) I went to that shop virtually every Saturday and spent hours rummaging through the back issue boxes as well as buying new comics.

As I got older I'd sometimes go two or three times a week. I bought virtually complete runs of **The Defenders**, **Tomb of Dracula**, **Master of Kung Fu** and anything else that took my fancy.

Most of these cost only 10p but occasionally I would spend anything up to £2 (a lot of money at that time) if I really wanted the comic, or more accurately, HAD to have that comic. Everyone thought it was charming, no one warned of the dangers.

This continued well into my early 20s, when two major things happened: I started to notice that comics were getting considerably more expensive – both new and old (the cheap back issue boxes were now highly collectible expensive back issue boxes) – and I met my wife, Martine.

Although she never understood my love of comics she was prepared to put up with it. It was a harmless enough hobby, she thought. I didn't drink excessively, didn't do drugs, had a steady job, wasn't violent but she did object to me disappearing for hours into the comics shop.

This ultimately led me to start using mail order services – I was sensitive to her objections. Now not only could I place my order without spending hours away from my beloved, I could order in advance, I wouldn't miss a key issue and could browse from the comfort of my own home from a catalogue of comics I might not otherwise have seen, and it was cheaper than going into the shop. I missed the shop but it was a compromise initially.

In this seeming Utopia, though, lurked one large problem. In my parcel would be an invoice. Martine might tolerate my quirky hobby but she sure as hell wouldn't understand how much money I could spend on it.

This was a new problem but was resolved relatively easily, although not without a pang of guilt, but I could live with that. The parcel would never be delivered to my home address – work, my mother's place, anywhere but home. The orders and invoices would be discreetly checked when I was alone and then filed in a place that Martine would never look – the attic. After delivery the parcel would be sneaked into my house without Martine's knowledge, again in a surreptitious location and an assumption of ignorance maintained - this last part may sound cruel but Martine isn't stupid and a box of 60 to 70 comics being delivered each month is bound to have cost more than a few pounds in her mind.

But I was set, the supply route established and paper trail hidden. Martine was always used to seeing comics, so as long as I rotated those I kept out with those secreted away the volume and consequently cost of comics never became an issue.

This status quo has been maintained through both good and bad times for the last 15 years. I would like to say I'm ashamed but I'm not. I'm an addict, I need my comics. If Martine discovered my secret there would be hell to pay (also I suspect reasonable grounds for divorce).

Imagine she pondered what might have been if the money I spent on comics had been diverted to other things. Foreign holidays every year, possibly; a smaller mortgage and fewer debts, likely; more luxuries for the family, definitely. I know all these things already but they do not sway me from my chosen path. How could I live without comics?

I've tried to sell some in the distant past and ended up off-loading small parts of my collection to try to make more space (we eventually moved). I can say with certainty I wish I hadn't; the price I got was poor and after a while I found I had a longing for those comics I sold that still remains to this day. I did give away most of my Marvel UK comics to a younger cousin and I found that far easier to live with.

Is it too extreme to say comics are an addiction? I don't think so. It's so hard to wait for that monthly parcel and when it arrives I gorge myself on its contents (in private, and usually late at night). I deceive my family and friends and make elaborate plans or go out of my way to ensure my secret is not discovered.

I'll try new comics, but never cancel existing ones and my order just keeps growing (thank goodness some companies go bust, even if I do miss them), the cost is secondary to my fix.

I couldn't go cold turkey and there are no organisations offering help or support. This is also a solitary hobby; when I was younger I could talk to a few friends but they outgrew it, and now as a 36-year old father of three to say I collect comics in any social arena invites looks of pity if not outright derision. It would be more acceptable to say I had a problem with substance abuse.

Comics cost too much, but then so do many other things in life. Me, I'm just glad I can maintain a relationship with my dealer (many thanks, Biff), and if he goes out of business I'm in trouble. I know it's in his interest to keep me dependent, and overcharging just is not an issue, although he does his best to tempt me further with discount vouchers for back issues and exclusive offers. As for me, if I tried to sell my comics now, how much would I get? And could I bear to part with them, regardless of the price I'd get?

Would it be worth the regret to follow? If I died tomorrow Martine would probably bin every single comic I own without a second thought, although she'd be surprised at how many there are. But I wouldn't be there to have to deal with that, and no one would be checking the price guides. My son, Zachary, is 10 and might fight to keep a few comics but probably not with any conviction.

So how much are my comics worth? To me they are priceless, to Martine worthless but to someone else, anyone else? If I could afford to buy **Uncanny X-Men** 1 to 100 in near mint condition, would I? In a heartbeat, you bet I would. Should I ? Should I give thought to the resale value? Why? They would be for me, not for anyone else.

Maybe if I tried I could get Zachary truly interested in comics and he could save my collection in the event of my demise, but this would mean I'd have to let him read them now and handle them and he doesn't really care or understand.

Can I really share this secretive passion? If he knew my secrets would he let them slip to Martine? Also I've seen how he treats his own comics (that I do buy for him). They are no more than disposable entertainment, no near mint nonsense for my son.

But then again, looking at my relationship with comics and all that it entails do I want my son to be exposed to that? Do I want him to repeat the pattern of my life? The cost, the deceit, is it worth the pleasure? Would it be right just so that I have someone else close to share my hobby with? Can a comic fan be forcibly created or are we born with some innate susceptibility to the emotions comics stimulate, and once exposed become addicts? Are comics my drug of choice?

Yes, so I don't think I should encourage him, let him find his own addiction.

Comics collecting as a hobby can be expensive, it always has been, one way or another. I can accept that to a degree, although it's not as though I have a great deal of choice in the matter.

I'd love it to be cheaper; I could indulge myself more often or even feel a little less guilty about the money I spend on comics. I could be a little more honest with Martine about the financial cost.

Do I blame anyone else for this? No, it's the cost of my own addiction. But the price of comics collecting..? It's sometimes just too damn high.

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Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

The mild-mannered creator/writer of the Internet's original comics industry rumour and news column has outraged many a publisher and survived more than one change of website. But, despite several attempts to stop it, the Squiddy Award-winning gutterpress site continues to thrive, with over 20,000 hits a week at its home of www.comicbookresources.com

From his unique vantage point, Rich often scoops the industry newshounds with his stories. Here are the highlights from this month's Gutter...

Krueger and...

Problems with the schedule of Jim Krueger's Image comics? Image publisher Erik Larsen is on the case.

Poster Kon-EL wrote on the Image message board: "I thought **Clockmaker** Act I was finally shipping this week with Act III in October. What's going on? I mean it's ridiculous they haven't put Act I out yet considering it's all reprints." Larsen showed he was more of a Joe Quesada style publisher than Paul Levitz with his reply... "Yeah – Jim Kreuger is a major fuck up. He's been telling us for MONTHS that it's on its way. Last thing he told me was that the LETTERER was holding it up – and that was over a MONTH ago! I'm not sure if this sorry son a bitch will EVER get his shit together but it sure does piss off a lot of us that have been waiting for it."

Erik concluded, "And please don't take any of this to mean I don't like Jim or his work, nothing could be farther from the truth. But it is VERY frustrating to be on the publishing end of this relationship and have to make excuses for the guy."

Live Words

Diamond Comics deal with a lot of publishers. A lot of publishers who change their mind all the time. And, especially if they're one of the Big Five, they can change their solicitations closer to publication date. But as a result, sometimes mistakes slip through.

"Certified Cool" products in the online *Previews* lists both the first issue of **1603**, the unannounced sequel to **1602**, and something called **Livewires** #1 and 2. Neither is available from Marvel for that month. The odds are they've been held over for January.

It's unlikely that Gaiman is the author of **1603**, but it's likely he'll have been involved in some way.

Keep it Ultimate

After his run on **Ultimate Fantastic Four**, Stuart Immomen will be drawing **Ultimate X-Men**. Brian K Vaughn will continue to write the series.

Polarisation

One observation of the current state of the comics industry is that the better selling titles are selling a lot better... regularly topping 200,000.

However at the other end, even from the bigger publishers, sales are dropping off a cliff. DC has had real problems launching any new project which isn't an instant top tenner, without any ties to existing lines or imprints... and even then it's not a sure thing. And with Marvel launching five number ones in one week, they've been relatively poorly ordered... and looking at in-store sales, may be slipping down the charts even then. Even books like **Hulk/Thing**, **Bulleseye** and **Gambit** are underperforming what one might have expected and the *Marvel Age* tag on **Jubilee** seems to have been an instant death.

Cliff Biggers of Dr No's Comics, Games & More told Lying In The Gutters: "So far today NO ONE has bought this week's Marvel dud, **Warlock**. Everyone who likes the character has flipped through the book and decided not to get it. Three customers who had expressed an interest for pull-and-hold have passed on

continued on next page...

Networks

Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and his team of Netmites

Net sightings

Son of God, Son of Krypton

STRAYING slightly into movie territory, Mark Millar has been busy online again, this time managing to draw attention towards the upcoming Superman movie, which I'm sure his Marvel bosses are delighted about. He posted the following little titbit on Millarworld at the end of August: You remember I told you to relax about *Superman?* That a very, very trusted and experienced director we'd all love was coming over? That McG was just a blip? That everything would be fine?

Well, my same good buddy has informed me that, as of last Thursday night, Mister Jim Caviezel is officially the new man of steel and what a perfect choice he is. Expect an announcement shortly.

Also, this *Superman Returns* thing was just for the press release. The movie itself is called *Superman* (Reeve's was called *Superman the Movie)* and it's starting everything from scratch. Brainiac. Krypton. Robots. Alien super-cities. There's so much we can do now that they couldn't in 78. I cannot WAIT for this.

The rumour soon reached the ears of the godfather of internet gossip, Ain't It Cool*'s Harry Knowles, who replied:* Jesus did not come from Krypton! Clark Kent is not a Highwayman! Hey folks, Harry here... Jim Caviezel is not going to be Superman. In fact right now, he isn't even being considered, though his representation is pushing him. Where is the search for the last son of Krypton? It's still a wide search. I'm very curious who is feeding Mark Millar this off-kilter info... as my sources are dead on.

Hmmm…The film is currently at the stage of preliminary location scouting all over the place, word has it Bryan has only just returned from checking out Australia.

Word has it, that Bryan is beginning to form ideas regarding who would do for Superman, but he has been staying mum on the project... only... they've never played Jesus or have they been a TV Superman.

Without beard or hippy hair, Jim Caviezel, who played Jesus in Mel Gibson's Passion of Christ, tipped by Mark Millar to be the next screen Superman.

So that's the gosh-darned truth of the matter.

However, Millar seemed very sure of his sources, and came back with an offer of a little wager: First up, this isn't an attack on Harry. I love him and check out his site every day. We love the same movies and seem to have the same pop culture obsessions and would doubtlessly get on like a house on fire should we ever meet.That said, just to hammer home how confident I am as regards my source (pretty much as good as it gets), I will personally write a cheque to charity for $1000 from my Wolverine royalties (**Wolverine** #20 and 21 out October 2004) if Jim Caviezel isn't cast as Superman on the day principal photography starts. Warners may have a couple of PR stunts planned prior to the final announcement, but this is a bet that Jim C is standing there in a Superman costume once the cameras start rolling. Now is AICN so sure of their sources that they will do the same?

The reply came quickly: Hey folks, Harry here... I love this. I totally agree with Mark Millar – I'm willing to bet we'd be the two point crunch as Nick Frost illustrated last night, if we ever met. I like Mark Millar.. Love his writing.. but folks... he's WAY wrong – and he'll be paying to a great cause, and that makes me happy, cuz.... JESUS ain't SUPERMAN! Mark Millar has issued a bet for charity, he named his charity as the Clyde Coast Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre... a wonderful wonderful charity. Unfortunately the charity that I won't be paying (cuz Jim Caviezel is not gonna be Superman in the Bryan Singer directed film) would be the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. So now the good folks at Clyde Coast need only wait for the first day of photography on Superman to be 1K richer.

As of late September there had still been no official announcement, but it's certainly likely to ingratiate Millar to Warners, even if DC still don't like him, very much!

IPC heroes reborn

ONE OF the big bits of news to come out of this year's San Diego was DC's upcoming ***Albion****, from Moores Alan & Leah, Shane Oakey and John Reppion.*

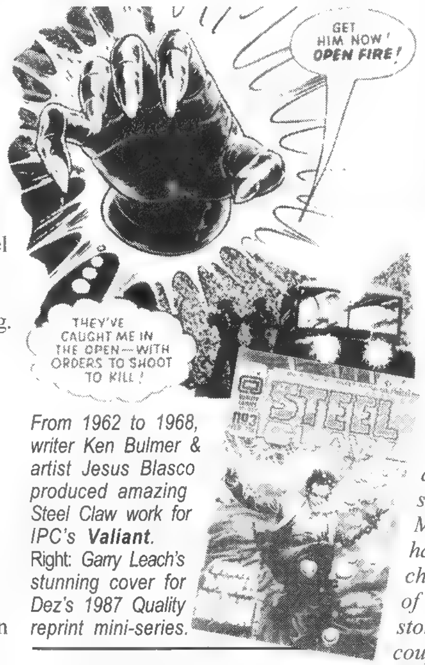
There was a little confusion over who exactly was doing what though, with Alan Moore's recent retirement announcement, coupled with his reluctance to work for DC.

Leah and John have set up a neat little site at uk.geocities.com/moorereppion@btinternet.com/

news.html *(whew!), and posted the following note to clear things up a little:*
There's so much disinformation going around about the IPC project at the moment and its got to the point where we feel obliged to set the record straight.
1. Alan Moore is retiring.
2. Alan Moore is not writing for DC.
3. Alan Moore has plotted the series. (That means that, along with ourselves and Mr. Oakley, Alan has decided what the story of the series is and what needs to happen in each issue. Once an issue is written Alan will look over it and see if he thinks that we've missed anything major out or if there are any small changes which need to be made.)
4. The series is being written by us (Leah Moore & John Reppion). We are currently a little over half way through writing issue one and we're both really enjoying it. Hopefully so will you.

Networks *is expecting big things of this series (which comes with Dave Gibbons covers).*

Shane Oakley's a great if seldom seen artist, and Moore the younger has proven her chops with a couple of great Tom Strong stories which, coupled with Moore the elder's affection for the characters, should produce a fab book.


GET HIM NOW! OPEN FIRE!
THEY'VE CAUGHT ME IN THE OPEN — WITH ORDERS TO SHOOT TO KILL!
STEEL
NO 3

From 1962 to 1968, writer Ken Bulmer & artist Jesus Blasco produced amazing Steel Claw work for IPC's ***Valiant****.*
Right: *Garry Leach's stunning cover for Dez's 1987 Quality reprint mini-series.*

Chris Bunting's COMICS WEBWORLD

Comics and cartoons have long had a symbiotic relationship, with comic-based cartoons and cartoon-based comics the result. In fact, this relationship is over an amazing 60 years old, stretching all the way back to Max Fleischer's 1941 Superman, so a look at such cartoons is well overdue…

DRG4'S MARVEL CARTOON PAGES *http://members.aol.com/drg4/index1.html*
During the '90s, Marvel produced a number of successful and memorable cartoons. These included X-Men, Iron Man, Spider-Man, Fantastic Four, Hulk and Silver Surfer. These exceptionally in-depth homage sites document them all by showcasing articles, episode guides, interviews, model sheets and exclusive info. Each site's design is by no means perfect, but what they lack in style they certainly make up for with content and dedication. **8**

INCREDIBLE HULK 1982 CARTOON *www.hulk.toonzone.net*
Yes, this was the series in which Bruce Banner's clothes magically reappeared. But apart from that it really wasn't bad. Remaining fairly close to the comic book mythos, it featured writers such as Paul Dini and guest-stars such as The Leader, She-Hulk, and even Doctor Octopus. The strongest Hulk cartoon site there is! **8**

JEFFREY SCOTT *www.jeffreyscott.tv*
To discover more about the people and processes behind the pictures, pay a visit to Emmy Award-winning writer Jeffrey Scott's significant site. Considered as "one of the top names in the animation field" by Stan Lee himself, Scott has written over 600 cartoons, including *Super Friends, Spider-Woman, Plastic Man* and *Spider-Man*. You also get treated to a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* script. Personally, I'd love to see his bible to Marvel's 1984 **Secret War**! **7**

SUPERHERO CARTOON SHOWS *www.pazsaz.com/scotpage.html*
Online since 1991, it explains how this site can boast the lowdown on a staggering 155 cartoon shows in its Superhero section alone (there's also a general 'toon section with 360 shows, as well as a respectable Anime offering). Old, new, successful, short-lived, you get cast info, series overviews, pics and episode listings on each and every one. Very cool. **8**

SUPERHEROES ANIMATION ART *www.animationartgallery.com/asuperheroes.html*
This is part of the California-based Wonderful Word of Animation Art Gallery, which buys and sells rare and original cartoon artwork. There's a decent selection, and the prices really are quite reasonable: £54 can buy you an original production cell of X-Men's Beast, while hand-drawn video covers of Spider-Man begin at around £56. Even if you don't want to buy, it's great just to browse for curiosity! Don't forget to check out the Batman section too. **7**

WORLD'S FINEST http://wf.toonzone.net/
Where do I begin? Dedicated to DC's contemporary animated shows – Batman, Superman, Gotham Girls, Justice League, Teen Titans – this site has it all! There's the exclusive (*Batman: The Animated Series* writers' bible); the backstage (interviews); the gallery (750+ images); the downloads (wallpapers and fonts); and even the entirely original (online **Dark Knight Adventures** comic book). It's no surprise that World's Finest has a monthly visitor tally of around 30,000! Spectacular. **9**

Honourable mentions:
Cartoon Research *[www.cartoonresearch.com]* and **Toonarific Cartoon Archive** *[www.toonarific.com]*

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

continued from previous page...

it... and one customer who prepaid for it said that he didn't want to take it home, even though he had already bought it. "It's not worth the eighth of an inch it'll take up in my comic box," he said.

"It's the same problem that we saw with **Silver Surfer**; Marvel has taken a character with a long-defined cosmic feel, then they've "reinvented" it as a concept that has virtually no appeal to those who were fans of the original character. And this has happened frequently enough that my Marvel customers are wary of any Marvel relaunches, and I'm seeing horrible sales on new series that should perform quite well – books like **Gambit**, **Elektra**, and **Jubilee** are selling less than mid-line books from IDW, Devil's Due, or Dreamwave."

I'm having a Marvel UK flashback...

Colour Me Curious

Marvel denies the rumour of a possible shift to digital inking for more books, although some internal and external sources point to a move towards pencillers being asked for tighter pencils, so that they will be "enhanced" for around $25 a page ready for printing.

I was also tipped off to a change in the production budget in other ways. Colouring fees are being reduced by half at Marvel, and there has been a move to outsource abroad, or hire juniors for the task. Why? It's getting easier to colour a book these days...

The usual reaction to this kind of news is negative. People lose jobs, or people have to change jobs, but as technology increases, it's luddite to ignore it. And a saving in the production budget can change the profitability level of certain books.

Watch out, the next edition of Photoshop will have an industry rumour monger feature.

Statuesque

The Marvelman/Miracleman rumours kicked up a notch with Bowen Design's reporting on their website of a new statue, in association with Marvels & Miracles. The article, first pulled then revived, originally stated that **Marvelman** the series would relaunch again from Marvel in December.

Marvel has repeatedly stated its intention to publish **Marvelman**, the series created by Alan Moore, Garry Leach and Dez Skinn. The revival appeared first in **Warrior**, an anthology magazine by Dez Skinn. When Eclipse published the series in the USA as **Miracleman**, it continued the story to its natural conclusion, then saw Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham continue in a very different style.

Neil Gaiman has committed himself to clarifying the publishing situation, which became very complex when Eclipse went bankrupt and potential owners of the 1950s series began to emerge.

Profits from Marvels's **1602** series written by Gaiman went to his company Marvels & Miracles LLC, as will proceeds from the case against Todd McFarlane. Indeed that latter case clarified a much supported rumour that Todd's supposed ownership of Marvelman/Miracleman was based on an Eclipse contract he acquired when he bought the company – but it had a reversion clause that returned ownership to previous owners.

As it stands, that gives Marvels & Miracles LLC 30% (Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham's rights), Garry Leach kingmaking with 60% (Alan Davis having granted all of his rights to Leach) and 10% to Dez Skinn. All creators on the series, from Alan Moore to Chuck Austen, own the rights to the work they created for the series.

After Bendis Board poster Mike Black discovered the Bowen statue listing, the board took it upon itself to claim Marvelman must be the shock appearance character at the end of the current **Avengers** arc – a story Bendis wasn't publically denying, but Gaiman did.

Reviews

Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, ***CI****'s comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.*

Review codes: *Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a* ***1*** *to* ***10*** *basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <---> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare* ***Bone*** *with* ***X-Men****, but review each within their genre.*

Review panel: *Marco Antony (MA), Chris E. Bunting (CEB), Jon Edwards (JE), James Gibbs (JG), Kelvin Green (KG), Stephen Hall (SH), David Knight (DK), Dominic McDonagh (DM), Keiron Mullens (KM), Tom McSween (TM), Ian Murphy (IM), Rob Nott (RN), Leonie O'Moore (LO), Mat Thomas (MT), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

Dark Horse

Chosen 3

by Millar & Gross

<=> If the ending to this short 'Son of God' mini becomes obvious halfway through the final issue, it's only because the alternative would be too much of a damp squib to actually make it into print. Suffice to say, the comic ends pretty much as you'd expect it to if it was an M. Night Shyamalan movie. Chosen was a short, sweet story that got to the point and didn't overstay its welcome. You don't get many of those any more. (RN) 7

Hellboy: The Corpse

by Mignola

Hellboy chases baby-snatching leprechauns in 1950s Ireland. Mike Mignola has great fun with ancient Irish traditions, a talking corpse and honest leprechauns in a tale that initially seems too familiar but has enough tricks of its own to consistently entertain. The art is wonderful, balancing both creepy and wilfully dark humour and for 25cents, it's a bargain! (IM) 7

DC Comics

Astro City Special 1

by Busiek & Sinclair; WildStorm

The best thing is definitely the Alex Ross cover, with its jet-age hero, Supersonic, with jet-engine gauntlets and boots, and a visor styled after the cockpit of a passenger plane. An unwilling superhero is persuaded out of retirement against his better judgement. It's not all that special, but it's a style of story-telling that fans of Astro City hold dear. (DK) 7

Batman 631

by Willingham & Kinsum + Sowd

Although it falls short of equalling the excitement of Robin #129, this chapter of *War Games* has its moments nevertheless. For starters there's Batman and chums disguising their presence at the scene of a school siege, Tim taking charge inside, and Nightwing's discreet entrance. The artwork is efficient, but manages to make Batgirl's non-lethal force look quite the opposite. How do you stun an opponent by twisting his neck? (DK) 6

Batman: Gotham Knights 56

by Lieberman & Barrionuevo + Portela

<+> Interrupting the *Pushback* storyline for the sake of the *War Games* crossover could have been a bad move, but the two blend together seamlessly, with a panoply of villains making cameo appearances without recourse to spurious plot devices. Hush and Prometheus play an appropriate part in the proceedings, still obsessed with finding Edward Nigma. Batgirl and Nightwing are the Gotham Knights featured this issue. (DK) 7

Batman: The Order of Beasts

by Campbell + White & Campbell + Evans

In 1940s London, Bruce Wayne stumbles into a secret society whose members are slowly being murdered. Eddie Campbell's period piece does sometimes feel like Sherlock Holmes crossed with Iain Rankin, but he is as ever wonderful at evoking a sense of time and place, as he so beautifully did in From Hell. The art here is painted in grimy greys and forest greens, and though short on details it is big on atmosphere, with a noir, rugged feel that welcomes an Orbison-esque soundtrack. Fabulous (IM) 8

The Batman Strikes 1

by Matheny & Jones + Beatty

After the phenomenal success of *Batman: The Animated Series* and its spin-offs in the past 12 years, Warner Bros has seen fit to reboot the Batman animated franchise and, apparently, tailor it to a younger audience. This accompanying comic based on the new show, *The Batman*, has not alleviated my concerns that the Dark Knight's new cartoon incarnation will be inferior to its acclaimed predecessor. In this issue, Bruce Wayne is depicted as being down with the kids: he digs old electric guitars, and he implores Alfred to call him Bruce. Alfred tells Bruce "It's been months since you've had a chance to mosh at one of those midnight concerts." With an almost embarrassingly out-of-character hero, and a bog-standard plot involving the Penguin (who looks more like the Mad Hatter), this is a decent read for kids, but older fans may be disappointed. The artwork by Christopher Jones and Terry Beatty is pleasant enough, being similar to the previous Batman Adventures style. (SH) 5

Bite Club 6

by Chaykin + Tischman & Hahn; Vertigo

<=> Leto Del Toro's attempt to reclaim his family's business backfires as his girlfriend cheats on him, the police bring him in for questioning and his uncle turns against him. However, when said business is the vampire Mafia, it's hardly surprising. Howard Chaykin and David Tischman's finale shows the vamp's true colours in an orgy of violence and back (or should that be neck?)-biting. Frank Quitely's stylish cover shows up David Hahn's more stripped-down interior art style. (MAT) 6

Caper 10

by Winick & Fowler

<+> Lou & Rich go on the run with the hand, leaving chaos in their trail and desperately avoiding the hit men sent after them. Judd Winick's cheap laugh and movie trivia-filled scripts are a marked contrast with the two serious tales that opened this series, and show his writing versatility. Imagine Pulp Fiction in print. Tom Fowler's pen and inks deliver both visual gags and a wealth of detail; coupled with Winick's astute scripts we have a rare book that should appeal to both lovers of farcical comedy and connoisseurs of intelligent comics. (IM) 8

DC Comics Presents The Flash 1

by various

A cover image from 1966 provides the inspiration for tributes by two creative teams. Jeph Loeb, Ed McGuinness and Dexter Vines do sterling work on a story that pits Barry Allen against Deadshot. Dennis O'Neill's more laboured yarn, ably illustrated by Doug Mahnke and Mark Farmer, interprets the cover much more literally, and features The Flash and Julius Schwartz teaming up to stop The Flash disintegrating. (DK) 6

Detective Comics 798

by Gabrych & Woods + Smith

The Bowery district is on fire, presumably due to events occurring in another tied-in Battitle. Barbara moans about being sidelined; supporting characters like Detective Montoya get their moment in the spotlight, and there's an interesting development for Tim Drake fans. It's a little unfair to *Gotham Knights* readers to continue the Poison Ivy/Riddler story as a back-up in other titles, but they're really not missing much. (DK) 5

Ex Machina 3

by Vaughan & Harris + Feister; WildStorm

<+> A snowplough driver's shot. Brian K. Vaughan's superhero-turned-Mayor script is fine, but a monthly comicbook feels too short for this story to naturally unfold: a graphic novel may have better-suited this plot. Tony Harris's pencils are too staid in dialogue-heavy scenes, lumbered by Tom Feister's chewy inks but both brighten up for externals and flashbacks. Excluding the sickly yellow skin tones, J.D. Mettler's well-lit scenes blaze indigo blues and scorched orange. (IM) 6

<=> Just as Mayor Hundred attempts to contain the furore over a controversial city-sponsored art exhibition, a greater threat reappears, murdering the city's dustmen. Vaughan's exploration of how a superhero would deal with real politics continues to offer an interesting spin on the powers-in-ordinary-life genre by being more realistic about life's complications and less idolising of heroes. Though a little static in places, Harris's smooth artwork remains impressive. (MAT) 8

Fables 28

by Willingham & Akins + Palmiotti; Vertigo

<-> Bigby meets up with Duffy, a WWII comrade, and they recall a covert operation behind German lines to stop scientists unleashing Frankenstein's Monster on the Allies. The journey to the castle is drawn out, but enjoyably detailed and has enough Bigby character moments to maintain interest, despite the issue being little more than as set-up for next issue's big fight. Tony Akins and Jimmy Palmiotti do a smooth job of imitating the regular artists, but fail to make use of the vibrant settings conjured up by writer Bill Willingham. (IM) 6

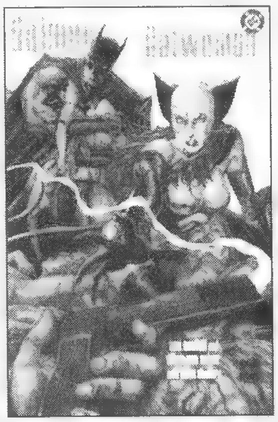
Fables 29

by Willingham & Akins + Palmitotti; Vertigo

<+> Loosely based on historical events, Bigby tries to destroy Frankenstein's Monster, while the Nazis plan to duplicate Bigby. Bill Willingham's plot has been a lively diversion and introduced Frankie, a cool new addition to the Fables cast; but too often Tony Akins & Jimmy Palmiotti's Bigby looks soft and cuddly, rather than dangerous man-beast. A couple of good jokes help keep readers distracted, but fun as this has been I'm ready to go back to the regular timeline. (IM) 6

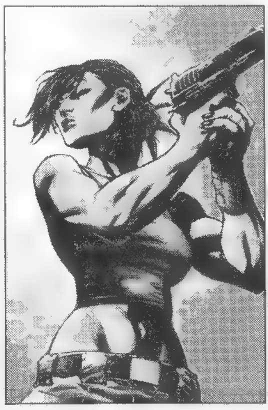
Batman & Catwoman: Trail of the Gun

by Nocenti & van Sciver



My Favourite writer craps out. In her peerless run on Daredevil, Ann Nocenti explored heartfelt issues with the softness of a kiss. In this, her 'Batman for Columbine,' the gun control polemic crushes her slender tale of Selina's mission to steal a fabled gun that never misses. It reads like a bad episode of Quincy, made worse by giant lettering that really SHOUTS DOWN YOUR EARHOLE and Ethan van Sciver's overly rendered art, which anticipates Brian Bolland with the onset of Alzheimer's. Some delightful touches suggest Nocenti can salvage this in part two – I have faith in my favourite writer. (MA) 6

Catwoman and Batman independently hunt a gun that always hits a target. While Nocenti's script can get preachy, she makes a sincere effort to illustrate all sides of gun control debates; always interesting, but rarely tense or exciting. Minor characters get the detail weaker writers omit, giving this book an assured air befitting prestige format. Chris Chuckry's flat colours strangle van Sciver's busy but capable art, and John Costanza'a letters are unimaginatively placed and bulky. There's good material here, but the execution fails. (IM) 6



The Losers 15

by Diggle & Garza; Vertigo

<+> This self-contained story dumps the rest of the gang and their quest in order to follow Aisha on a rescue mission to Turkmenistan, and it's all the better for it. Good writing, excellent artwork, and strong characterisation. Why can't the series always be like this? (KG) 8

<=> Ballsy Afghan Aisha returns to Turkmenistan to rescue her partner who is being held captive by corrupt CIA agents, but will her feminine wiles be sufficient to bring him to safety? Andy Diggle hints that there's more to Aisha's personality than an action-babe with a knife, but fails to bring much emotion to the severe character. Alé Garza makes a surprise turn as artist, managing to mimic Jock's spikey and shadowed style effectively. (MAT) 8

Fallen Angel 14

by David & Lopez

<+> Another new reader-friendly issue. With its unique ambience mixing both the supernatural and the street level, razor-sharp scripting by Peter David, and expression-filled art by David Lopez, this title has all the ingredients to become a fan-favourite. And the bombshell dropped at the end is sure to shock even regular readers. (CEB) 8

Gotham Central 22

by Brubaker & Lark + Gaudiano

<=> Detective Driver connects the high school bombing, the Mad Hatter and a false rape allegation. Ed Brubaker's enticing plot is strengthened by its detailed characterisation – weary people surrounded by corruption, seeking redemption in all the wrong places. Michael Lark and Stefano Gaudiano continue to provide striking, vital and insistent art, despite feeling cramped, balancing attention to detail with mood. Lee Loughridge consistently crowns their superior work with seething, noir-ish colours. A class act. (IM) 8

Gotham Central 23

by Rucka & Lark + Gaudiano

<++> When Montoya and Esperanza stumble into a shoot-off off with hit man Black Spider, they face allegations and investigation. This book fortunately reads independently of the Bat-books' *War Games* crossover, although Greg Rucka's plot shows how uniforms are affected by gang warfare. The artwork is impeccable, Lee Loughridge's masterful colours illuminating still dark interiors, Stefano Gaudiano's impressionist inks deliver uncertainty and apprehension over Michael Lark's captivating pencils. Probably the most accomplished art team working in comics today. (IM) 8

Human Target 12

by Milligan & Pulido; Vertigo

<++> Maria's family send her to live with her mother in America, using Mary Chance's gangster-threatened smuggling ring. When she and her Coyote guide go missing, Mary and Chris plot revenge. Peter Milligan excels at these tense, real world inspired plots that inform and entertain, but Javier Pulido's pencils, usually so reliable, feel marginally off-kilter, too cute for this painful story. Even so, his art still impresses, and pages of Maria, cute little girl, being led to a life of prostitution and abuse are all the more wretched for that pretty/hellish contrast. (IM) 7

Human Target 13

by Milligan & Pulido;Vertigo

<+> Chance infiltrates a child prostitute ring. The seedy, despicable world of sex slavery is brought to readers without the need for detail. Enjoyably plotted and convincingly scripted, it's a book that leaves a bad taste in the mouth only because of the unsavoury subject matter. And that's a good thing. Javier Pulido's art initially feels out of place on this bitter subject, but makes the tale all the more poignant for his images of sweet, seemingly-innocent small town America. (IM) 8

JLA 103

by Austen & Garney

<-> Green Lantern learns the hard way that he can't be everywhere at once. Part three of *Pain of the Gods* sees Ron Garney's art loosen up. The story is familiar, but in addition to recycling the plot of the previous two issues, this instalment develops the story, and John Stewart's dilemma is truly stomach-churning. Unfortunately this chapter is marred by a glib resolution worthy of Saturday morning cartoons. (DK) 6

JLA 104

by Austen & Garney

<--> Chuck Austen breaks away from the format established in the three previous issues by having the Martian Manhunter deal with his grief in his own way: going to ground as a private eye. It's an inconsequential instalment, devoid of action, that will undoubtedly irritate continuity buffs. The possibility that J'onn might be almost as upset as Green Lantern about the destruction of Xanshi seems not to have arisen. (DK) 4

<=> When J'onn J'onzz has trouble relating to his fellow Justice Leaguers he runs away into a secret identity. Then they find him and give him a group hug. He feels a lot better for it. The end. I'm not sure if it's just Ron Garney's inexpressive art at work here, but I got nothing from this story. Using a crisis of faith to bring a character out in one easy issue is one of the hoariest old chestnuts around, and the fact that Austen starts his run on this title by taking six months to do it to the main characters one at a time doesn't bode well. Ho-hum, only two more group hugs to go... (MT) 2

JLA 105

by Austen & Garney

<++> A battle with a new foe takes an emotional toll on Wonder Woman in this surprisingly good chapter of *The Pain of The Gods*. Ron Garney's depiction of Wonder Woman is hit and miss, but he serves up a spectacular fight scene and a superbly effective splash page of Diana in the aftermath. In the second half of the book, everyone looks like who they're supposed to be! (DK) 6

Majestic 1

by Abnett & Lanning + Kerschl

Majestros, stranded on Earth, seeks a way to return to his own world. A flashback explaining how he came to be in Metropolis is shoe-horned into a fun story that shows his interaction with the DC universe. For all his superiority, the Kheran warlord is a sympathetic character. Artistic license allows Superman and Majestros to have strange-looking noses, and all the carbon in a pencil to make a reasonable quantity of diamond. (DK) 7

Majestic 2

by Abnett & Lanning + Kerschl

<=> Majestros adopts a secret identity and boards with a human family to help him better understand humankind while stranded on Earth. Unlike Superman, he's not so adept at keeping a low profile, and his lack of diligence in lying low leads to a misunderstanding that could blow his cover. An enjoyable read, with likeable art, and a main character who is certainly compassionate, if heavy-handed. (DK) 7

Nightwing 97

by Grayson & Lilly + Ownes

Writer Devin Grayson has a lot going on in her share of the *War Games* crossover. Nightwing and Robin break up a gun battle in a massage parlour, while Batman ponders who's behind the gang war. From the reader's point of view, it looks like it's the sadistic torturer in the white kid gloves, but how many Bat-villains could that be? This chapter suggests a possible candidate. (DK) 7

Outsiders 14

by Winick & Raney

<+> The Fearsome Five turn on Doctor Sivana, while the Outsiders bicker and re-group. Judd Winick adroitly scripts the heroes, but the plotting is weak and he struggles to give the villains any depth. Tom Raney's pencils and inks provide some unusual effects – ripples and blurs and Photoshop-style polish, but in some places more detail would be welcome, while he draws a very fake plastic looking Arsenal. Raney's art is a blossoming venture, and he deserves more subtle material. (IM) 5

Promethea 31

by Moore & Williams III + Cox;
America's Best Comics

Alan Moore shows us what happens after the apocalypse, and frankly it's not worth staying up past bedtime for. I don't know what's more depressing – the embarrassing sixth form poetry quality of this penultimate issue, or the revelation that the afterlife is even more tedious than the reality that preceded it. To quote one of the characters in the issue: 'I survived the apocalypse and all I got was this lousy t-shirt'. Yeah. This guy wrote Watchmen once, y'know. (RN) 6

Robin 128

by Willingham & Scott

Stephanie/Robin aids Batman against Scarab – and is unprepared for the consequences of disobeying orders. Bill Willingham writes with charm, leaving eager to please Stephanie more sympathetic than a lesser writer might. Damian Scott's art is uneven: he nails Tim Drake's gloom, his Batman looks formidable and his panels arrangements are often stylish; but I struggle to appreciate his pretty Robin and her poorly-defined hair, which I suspect would benefit from an outside inker's eyes. Criticisms aside, this book is consistent and arguably DC's best. (IM) 8

Robin 129

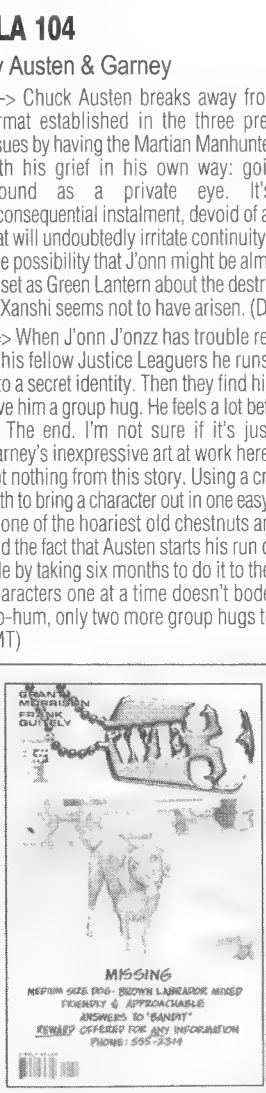
by Willingham & Camuncoli
+ Ruggiero

Aside from the question of why a gang boss would send his daughter to school when most schools are closed due to a widely publicised gang war, even with a gentlemen's agreement to leave wives and daughters out of the conflict, this is a pretty good comic. When Odessa thugs try to kidnap Darla Aquista, Tim Drake comes to his school friend's rescue in his civilian identity. It's goshdarned exciting. (DK) 8

Swamp Thing 7

by Pfeifer & Corben; Vertigo

<=> The newly demoted earth elemental finds



We3 #1

by Morrison & Quitely; Vertigo

If CI ran a *pick of the month* spot, WE3 would win it for me this month. I haven't been too impressed by recent Grant Morrison outputs. Neither X-Men, The Filth or Seaguy did it for me, but WE3 is Morrison storming back with a vengeance. Make no mistake – this is an impressive piece of work, and the quality is in the detail. A friend told me that the best comic books are the ones you can't read quickly, and if you want to savour WE3, you're going to have to take your time. This isn't a snack that you can eat between meals without ruining your appetite. Welcome back, Mr Morrison (and Frank Quitely). (RN) 9

When a US government project using pets as cyborg killing machines is decommisioned, the We3 team of a dog, a cat and a rabbit spectacularly escape from their base and go on the run from the military. This adrenaline-fuelled *Homeward Bound* features some absolutely stunning action art from Quitely, and Morrison's clearly put a lot of thought into the character and behaviour of our protagonists instead of just giving them guns and armour. Excellent stuff and I can't wait to see what happens next! (MT) 8

Morrison teams up with Quitely to tell the tale of a superpowered team: but these aren't mutants or DC's finest, but a trio of stray pets augmented with cyborg bodysuits by the US Army's tech-division! Only Morrison could manage to give such a wildly bizarre concept some credibility; however, far from being one of his usual mind-bending jaunts, the animals' fight to return home may be his most soppy series yet. Quitely's finely detailed panels, stylish tech designs and quirky faces are of his usual high calibre. (MAT) 8 himself hunted by an inquisitive cryptozoologist and a millionaire looking to fill his mantlepiece with another stuffed monster. Will Pfeifer brings an intriguing story to bear on the muck-monster after Andy Diggle's explosive first arc, but the real seller of book is Richard Corben. His bulky and grubby artwork brings the necessary style to the character and his muddy environs. (MAT) 8

Y – The Last Man 25

by Vaughan & Guerra
+ Marzan Jr; Vertigo

Yorick uses his magic skills to defend a Catholic Church from angry Amazons. Brian K Vaughan's script is okay on the exchanges between Yorick and new girl Beth, but weaker on the confrontations and discussion of Catholic history. Pia Guerra's deceptively simple art generally does well to give the plot both edge and feeling, but a couple of key scenes would have benefitted from a more dramatic artist. Zylonol's colours are rich and complimentary, cementing strong artwork. (IM) 7

Y – The Last Man 26

by Vaughan & Guerra
+ Marzan Jr; Vertigo

<=> What happened to Yorick's sister, Hero? See her sign up with the Amazons and meet Yorick's jailbird and cosmonaut friends. Brian K. Vaughan offers a deliberately fractured narrative that throws up as many questions as it answers, a constant of this title. Hero emerges as needy, lonely and unbalanced (so she'll fit right in), qualities which Pia Guerra's pencils subtly bring out. Jose Marzan Jr's inks crown the art, giving jail scenes a dark, bitter feel. (IM) 7

Yet Another Book of Magic 1

by Spencer & Ormston; Vertigo

Had Tim Hunter been Peter Milligan's crap one idea character, rather than Neil Gaiman's crap one idea character, it's unlikely that DC would show anything like as much persistence in raising his comic from the dead. Bizarrely, this time Karen Berger's impression of Peter Cushing in a Hammer Frankenstien film has produced something worthwhile. This is a lot better than anyone would have expected. Dean Ormston's art is (as always) glorious and Si Spencer's tart, witty and unpleasant script almost matches it. Describing this as the best Tim Hunter comic to date is damning it with faint praise, and it deserves a lot better than that. Still, it also deserves an audience but this is far enough removed from John Ney Reiber's Gaiman by numbers arse drivel to be worth a look, so the purists will doubtless avoid it like the plague. A real pity, but these things happen. (DM) 8

Image

Brit:
Red, White, Black & Blue

by Kirkman & Rathburn

<-> Superpowered OAP Brit resolves matters with his ex-wife by shooting her volatile offspring into the Sun; meanwhile the French ally themselves with alien invaders and Brit's supervisor Donald explains to his wife that he's an android. Robert Kirkman brought some fresh ideas to superhero genre with his character's previous outings, but they're starting to tire, with the dodgy racist undertones and sacrificial endings coming right out of the cliché bag. The loss of Tony Moore's scuffy greytoned artwork, replaced by Cliff Rathburn's cleaner style also makes for disappointment. (MAT) 6

Invincible 15

by Kirkman & Ottley

<+> Robert Kirkman proves again it's possible to come up with new twists on superhero themes. Witness the unique side-effect of Monster Girl's powers. While Mark is away serving his country on a distinctly irregular diplomatic mission, his mother settles business with Nolan's publisher (see this scene drawn by E.J. Su in *SuperPatriot: War on Terror*). Finally, there's a moment between William and Eve that is cute to the nth degree. (DK) 8

<+> Debbie makes a new friend on discovering her publisher is married to a superhero; while Aquarus's widow demands Invincible as her new mate – with the US government keen not to upset this underwater race. This issue is peppered with great gags, harking back to old issues while still entertaining new readers, and the humour doesn't undermine the dramatic structure. While 'monster needs a mate' stories are old hat, Kirkman has plenty of fun with the notion, giving colourist Bill Crabtree well-taken opportunities to shine. (IM) 7

Invincible 14-15

by Kirkman & Ottley + Crabtree

<=> A couple of quieter issues here as the characters deal with the aftermath of Omni-Man's betrayal. While there are no big revelations or events, both writing and art combine to make this an excellent read. This is one of the best superhero comics around right now. (KG) 8

Invincible 14

by Kirkman & Ottley

<=> Invincible and the new Global Guardians tackle an alien invasion in the Middle East. With Robert Kirkman writing, even such a routine scenario is given an inventive twist. There's dialogue aplenty, but none of it is wasted and it all adds up to a good read. With his father gone and his mother in distress, Mark finds moral support is lacking where he most needs it. (DK) 7

The new Guardians fight off a Flaxan invasion force, while Mark and Debbie struggle to deal with the truth about Omni-Man. Kirkman is elegantly introducing the new status quo for the book, with a fine balance of action, wit and talk. Ryan Ottley's pencils are on powerful form for the final scenes where Debbie's grief overwhelms her; here his inks are more subtle than usual, and colourist Bill Crabtree pulls the scene together. If only the rest of the book was as impeccably illustrated! (IM) 7

Savage Dragon 116

by Larsen

<-> Savage Dragon and Jennifer are sent out to fight monsters in the Danger Zone west of Chicago, including The Brainchild. The artwork is equal to Erik Larsen's best, including a spectacular double-page spread of Rita Medermade in costume; but giant Rita alone doesn't compensate for the desultory story. (DK) 5

SuperPatriot: War on Terror 1

by Kirkman & Su

Robert Kirkman is the ideal chronicler of SuperPatriot's adventures, tying in continuity to both *Savage Dragon* and *Invincible*. E.J. Su's solid and confident art perfectly complements Kirkman's writing. Despite the *War on Terror* subtitle, fewer parallels with real-world events are drawn here than in *Savage Dragon: God War*. SuperPatriot is otherwise occupied fighting assorted Nazis and the criminal organisation Hydro. (DK) 6

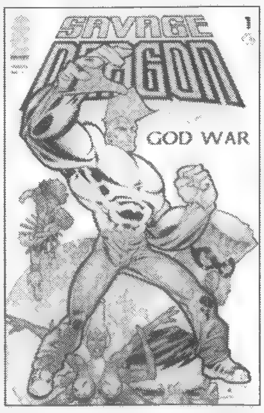
Tales From The Bully Pulpit

by Cereno & MacDonald

This is just about as crazy, marvellous and funny a comicbook as you're ever likely to read. Time-travelling American president Theodore Roosevelt and the ghost of inventor Thomas Edison journey to the future where Hitler's Argentine progeny has exported the evil Nazi creed of racial hatred to the planet Mars. To say much more would be to give away too much of what makes this comic so brilliant. (DK) 9

Savage Dragon: God War 1

by Kirkman & Englert



A tragic accident waiting to happen brings the fugitives and refugees of God World into conflict with the Special Operations Strikeforce once more. It's not electrifying, but plenty of Kirbyisms and a cameo by a heavyweight from the past may please some Savage Dragon fans. The banal passage of time aboard a passenger airplane is communicated cleverly. Joe 'color flats' Keatinge provides a witty creator biographies intro at the back. (DK) 6

When a plane strikes the cloaked and hovering God Town, the gigantic structure crashlands into Denver, levelling it. The Pentagon wants to strike back, a renegade Thor has escaped his cell and a monster's been freed from hell by the crash. Can anyone save the day? Oh thank goodness, the Savage Dragon's made a splash panel appearance on the final page of *his own comic!* Why, if there's room in the story for three pages of banal aircraft passenger chit-chat at the beginning is there only one panel for Dragon? This mini reeks of padding by halfway through the first shoddily illustrated issue, and the premise is pretty weak too. Let's hope that Savage Dragon actually being in issue 2 will lead to some improvement. (MT) 1

The Walking Dead 10

by Kirkman & Adlard + Rathburn

<=> Rick rushes to save his injured son, aided by another group of survivors from the zombie apocalypse, but what secrets do their saviours keep? Although he could be knocked for the schmaltzy moments, Robert Kirkman keeps the tension raised after the violence of the previous issue, even though no undead make an appearance. Charlie Adlard's rough linework suits the unkempt characters, but doesn't quite capture the autumnal setting. (MAT) 8

Marvel

Alpha Flight 7

by Lobdell & Ross + McKnna

The team uses the Plodex ship technology (notable teleportation), and returns home. Major Mapleleaf and Puck! go on a date. Scott Lobdell's light-hearted, frothy writing lacks heart substance, and I never really 'got' his humour, so this comic kinda sails on by me. The art is competent but never remarkable, while the unmasked Nemesis's little-girl-lost look feels out of character and out of place. Nothing to see here, move along now... (IM) 3

Amazing Spider-Man 511

by Straczynski & Deodato
+ Pimentel

<=> The mystery surrounding the character of Gwen Stacy continues and deepens, as the stakes are raised. Writer J. Michael Straczynski makes the reader ask one tantalising question after another, which a much-needed letters page would not only feed off, but would also intensify. Marvel must have waved a magic wand to find this dark saga's ideally suited art team of Mike Deodato, Joe Pimentel and Matt Milla. (CEB) 8

<-> Spidey discovers the identity of his assailants, or at least thinks he does... The plot is going off the boil here, and while I'm still interested, I'm no longer excited by the twists and turns. At this point, I just want to get to the end and see what's what. In a surprise move, as Straczynski's writing stumbles, Deodato's art improves greatly. (KG) 7

Avengers 501

by Bendis & Finch + Miki

<=> The team regroups, and internal tensions begin to show. This is great stuff, with a writer finally realising that the Avengers play a high-stakes game and, as such, things will sometimes go badly wrong. Good characterisation on the whole, and the art, while not really to my taste, is a good fit. (KG) 8

<+> Casualties, comatose and dead, are taken to hospital, while the walking wounded argue over causes and consequences. Brian Michael Bendis captures the bickering Hawkeye-Cap relationship, but some mouthpiece dialogue – however dramatic – sounds wrong for the characters. David Finch draws memorably bleak She-Hulk 'Hulks out' battle scenes, and Danny Miki is a steadying inker; and if Frank D'armata's non-combat colours were more sympathetic, I'd really praise the artwork (IM) 7

<-> The 'B' word in the writing credits is enough to drag me back to the pages of this title after many a long year sneering at it from the comfort of my Vertigo bunker. Mr Bendis has declared war on the Avengers in the pages of the title, but more than that, he has

declared war against Millar's The Ultimates, promising us a super saga that will kick the rival title's butt. A tall order indeed, and so far – on the strength of two issues – he hasn't quite accomplished anywhere near that, but he is giving us a damn fine superhero tale, and that's good enough for me here in the cheap seats. Pass the popcorn, eh? (RN) 7

<=> The team's worst day progresses, with tensions exploding after last issue's events. Will the members rally together to find the root of their problems? Bendis may be treading worn ground with the "unsettle the team and see who is left standing" plot, but his skilful dialogue and earnest desire to make the book relevant again shines through. Finch's amazing pencilling brings the much needed cool to the pages, even though everyone has the same chiselled jaw-line. (MAT) 8

Cable & Deadpool 5

by Nicieza & Zircher + Udon

Infected by the Deliverance Device, our heroes must exchange bodily fluids to survive a complete biological meltdown. How they know this will work is beyond my ken, but the scene where Cable takes Deadpool orally is one of the more disturbing scenes of recent times. Fabian Nicieza tries hard to reproduce Deadpool's immature banter, but it feels more like a child's impersonation of Gail Simone's Agent X than the real thing; while the art fails to give this apocalyptic plot a titanic feel, mugging key scenes. A mess. (IM) 4

Cable & Deadpool 6

by Nicieza & Zircher + Rob Ross

<+> Cable misuses Lightmaster's Façade Virus to give everyone on Earth pink skin. Fabian Nicieza's plotting works on folk making the most outlandish assumptions, and them proving right, but I'm sure that won't trouble lovers of this kind of farce. Cable's actions become less and less comprehensible, but there are enough gross scenes and dumb jokes to keep lovers of Deadpool's junk happy. All told, this ain't a book for me but should passably please fans of wild and inane action titles. (IM) 5

Captain America 31

by Kirkman & Eaton + Geraci

Captain America and his girlfriend Diamondback are prisoners of the Serpent Society, but it's not long before they're brawling with a crowd of their captors. Walk-on parts for Nick Fury, Spider-Man and Cap's landlady lighten the mood before Steve Rogers is dealt a crushing blow. This is not Robert Kirkman at his best, but enough to persuade me to buy a Captain America comic, which is surely the point. (DK) 6

<++> Cap and Diamondback take on the Serpent Society, forcing Diamondback to reconsider her alliance with the Red Skull – with shocking consequences. Kirkman's plotting, slow for his lacklustre first two issues, now feels rushed. I found myself breathing hard with excitement and exclaiming in shock at the final scenes, both rare reactions. Drew Gulaci's heavy inking doesn't make this pleasurable to look at, despite a vicious-looking Red Skull, but isn't so terrible that it sinks the boat. (IM) 7

Captain America & The Falcon 6

by Priest & Bennett + Jadson

<-> The Falcon, trying out a cybernetic version of his costume, go on the run with Cap who, suffering hallucinations, discovers the rescued 'virus' is human DNA, and necks Scarlet Witch. Christopher Priest's script is frenetic; few major plot advances occur but the book fair rattles along. Joe Bennett's pencils carry pleasing echoes of Jack Kirby's Cap but struggle to direct the narrative flow. (IM) 5

ASTONISHING
X-MEN

Astonishing X-Men 4

by Whedon & Cassaday

<=> It's hard to believe that even Marvel could capture lightning in a bottle twice in quick succession: first by gaining the creative team of Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely, now with Joss Whedon and John Cassaday... but they have. What a terrific comic this is turning out to be. With revelation after revelation it really is earning the title "Astonishing". (CEB) 8

<-> The X-Men investigate Benetech, while Ord pays the mansion a visit. Apart from a big revelation towards the end, this issue feels like a fill-in or place marker as very little of importance actually happens. Although Cassaday's art is growing on me.. (KG) 7

<+> Ord attacks the X-Mansion, but finds only trainees there (sadly not the New Mutants cast, anonymous newbies) because the team is investigating Benetech's mutant dissection. Whedon offers flashes of wonderful dialogue, plus an echo of his Angel television show in the shocking final scene, but it's Cassaday's art that is the book's prime mover. Not every page is a matchless joy – some faces look plastic – but there are enough beautifully designed, moody and impeccably-lit scenes to impress. Laura Martin's colours are peerless, until the final, too dense pages. (IM) 8

What time is it? Why, it's Whedon time, that's what! The Buffy-meister proves that X-Men comics could have been good any time in the last 10 years if the writers hadn't been obsessed with style above substance. Great dialogue, great characterisation, great writing and a surprise blast from the past at the end. Did I mention the great art? Take it as read. (RN) 8

<=> While the evil Ord attacks the institute and its students, the team infiltrates the sinister biotech lab developing the mutation cure, and Kitty bumps into a long-lost comrade. Whedon's smooth scripting may cause surprises once again, but this time it isn't by the return to costumes. Not that Cassaday's exemplary artwork doesn't take your breath away as well. (MAT) 7

Captain America & The Falcon 7

by Priest & Bennett + Jadson

<-> Falcon, wound-up worryingly tight, and Cap plan their next moves.Cap worries he's under mental attack from the Naval anti-Cap, leaving readers confused, unsure if his kissing Scarlet Witch was one such psychological illusion. Joe Bennett's Falcon reflects well on the scripted aggression, but I do question that Cap would have so modern a hairstyle. There's starkness in Bennett's pencils that struggles to portray the emotions of a scene; perhaps he's unsure of just what Cap is feeling. Uncertainty clouds the issue. (IM) 5

Daredevil 63

by Bendis & Maleev; Marvel Knights

<+> An assassin strikes at Matt and Natasha while narrating his memoirs in a ceaseless stream of babble. Is anyone else getting nostalgic for Frank Miller's silent slugfests? Then it's talking heads again, Natasha really chewing Matt's ear off, Brian Michael Bendis with his Random Mamet Dialogue Generator going full chat. Artist Alex Maleev continues to stupefy. Has anybody since Neal Adams raised the bar so audaciously? (MA) 8

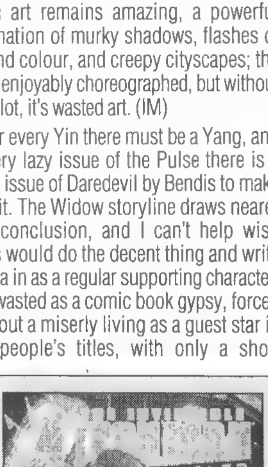
<-> An assassin sent for Black Widow strikes, armed with a sonic device to cripple Daredevil. Not much plot here, but Maleev's delicious ragged art remains amazing, a powerful combination of murky shadows, flashes of light and colour, and creepy cityscapes; the fight is enjoyably choreographed, but without more plot, it's wasted art. (IM) 7

<-> For every Yin there must be a Yang, and for every lazy issue of the Pulse there is a superb issue of Daredevil by Bendis to make up for it. The Widow storyline draws nearer to its conclusion, and I can't help wish Bendis would do the decent thing and write Natasha in as a regular supporting character. She's wasted as a comic book gypsy, forced to eke out a miserly living as a guest star in other people's titles, with only a short miniseries every five years to look forward to in her old age. She's not getting any younger, you know! Equal rights for beautiful Russian super spies, that's what I say... (RN) 8

<=> Matt is brought to a standstill by an assassin aware of his every weakness, with only the delectable fugitive Black Widow to protect him. Although it could be levelled that his plots can be drawn-out, Bendis's knack for realistic dialogue sucks you in, engaging with the characters plight. Maleev's bleak depiction of New York is brightened by his stunning Black Widow: I demand to know who models for him! (MAT) 8

Iron Man 87

by Ricketts & Harris + Feister + Wallace



<-> Iron Man has slaughtered all the Stark directors, and attacked Rumiko; can Tony clear his name? Mark Ricketts' story feels drawn out, not helped by padding Iraqi action scenes, and the emotions feel artificial rather than sincere and moving. Tony Harris's pencils are not charmless, but the two inkers struggle to emphasise his strengths, leaving this issue muddled and messy. (IM) 4

<=> Everyone is in shock after Iron Man's assassination of the Stark Enterprises CEOs: none more so than Tony Stark himself. Is someone impersonating him? Ricketts brings more tragedy to the title in the Avengers crossover event, but I think we all prefer the character at his low points. Harris's well-defined linework suits the techy hero well, but is also surprisingly expressive. (MAT) 7

District X #4

by Hine & Medina + Sicat;
Marvel Knights

<-> Humans taking mutant drug Toad Juice are dying horrible deaths; Bishop and Ortega track the suppliers. David Hine's inner-city police drama is building nicely, with a wide variety of slowly forming supporting characters, but it's still lacking in intrigue. Lan Medina only imitates regular penciller David Yardin, but if Andy Troy and Alejandro Sicat had softened their colours and inks then the art might have really impressed. A little dull at times, but potentially a first-rate series. (IM) 6

District X #5

by Hine & Yardin + Sicat;
Marvel Knights

<++> Bishop and Ortega confront the enigmatic Mr M; and Bishop meets Ortega's family over dinner. As a mutant ghetto Gotham Central, this book has yet to reveal the same depth of character, but revels in a kookier, more twisted community where everyone's a freak – some more than others. David Hine's writing is establishing this book as a meaty, succulent dish, while David Yardin's pencils show more flair and skill with each issue. His sense of narrative structure excels through the final pages, ensuring a dramatic and well-paced climax. (IM) 7

Doctor Spectrum 1

by Barnes & Foreman + Dell; MAX

Joe's experiments with the crystal oddly misfire; much of the story takes place in a fantasy world, with the reader unclear how much is Joe's memory and how much is memory distorted by the crystal. This nowhereland is frustrating and disinteresting, to me; writer Sara "Samm" Barnes needs to bring real-world dramatic qualities to this to keep me onboard. Travel Foreman's pencils feel like a weak Gary Frank impersonation rather than a personal style, and suffer indelicate John Dell inks, but Studio F's colours are cutely applied and fortify otherwise ordinary artwork. (IM) 5

Excalibur 3

by Claremont & Lopresti
+ Adams + Pepoy

<+> Hub, Hack and Chimere try to hijack a plane. Though the new characters are still slightly developed, this might be an interesting book without the Xavier/Magneto controversy. Instead it's difficult to concentrate on the presented plot because of distracting, unanswered questions. Aaron Lopresti's pencils are fine, if rarely exciting; but while the artwork may not be inspiring, it does have a good narrative feel and prefers not to over-egg dramatic puddings. (IM) 5

Excalibur 4

by Claremont & Lopresti + Adams

<++> The Magistrates try to reclaim Genosha

as their own, while Magento and Xavier face an Omega Sentinel, underwater. Easily the best issue so far, Chris Claremont establishes more believable reasons for Xavier and Magneto to work together, while still giving new, unfamiliar characters needed page time. Although I still think Greg Adams' inks are too heavy-handed, his work with Aaron Lopresti is improving and both do well on the underwater scenes. There's nothing special here, but perhaps it's a work in progress. Too soon to give up on it just yet. (IM) 6

Exiles 51

by Bedard & Sakakibara

<-> An evil Mimic confronts his heroic Exiles counterpart. Tony Bedard extracts considerable interest from this tale of the same guy whose life took diverging paths, but the epilogue feels unnecessarily pat, and the arc might have benefited from more than two issues. Mizuki Sakakibara's art struggles to nail expressions and to rise above competent, but has a clean and appealing character. (IM) 5

Exiles 52

by Bedard & Calafiore + McKenna

<+> The Exiles fight antibodies and the Avengers in the aftermath of Ego's attempt to reproduce with Earth. Goofy but fun, as expected under Tony Bedard's pen, where large-scale plotlines have dominion over character and dialogue. There's never enough time to understand each dimension's differences, and how they came about. Jim Calafiore's pencils are slowly gaining clarity and consistency, although a few fight panels are confused; but these are quibbles – this book is one heap of fun! (IM) 6

Fantastic Four 516

by Waid & Kesel + Medina

<=> Long-time enemies, The Frightful Four, have sucked the FF into another confrontation, but this is as much a family feud as it is a grudge match. A quality storyline from start to finish, and Mark Waid gets my vote for screenwriter of the FF movie. Guest art team Paco Medina and Juan Vlasco have been outstanding, and co-writer Karl Kesel also deserves applause. (CEB) 8

Fantastic Four 517

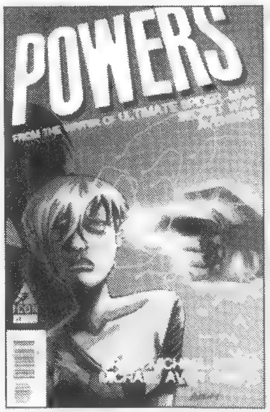
by Waid & Wieringo + Kesel

<-> With The Avengers 'disassembled', only the Fantastic Four can help when Manhattan comes under attack. From pylons. Which seems a really lame tie-in to 'Avengers Disassembled', but apparently that's enough to cross-over. How many times have the FF saved the day when the Avengers were out of town before now? A little sharp dialogue saves Mark Waid's script, but I'm no fan of Mike Wieringo's art. I find it emotionally flat, over-acted and plastic, all concreted by Karl Kesel's forceful inks, which remove whatever subtlety was originally in the pencils. (IM) 4

Kabuki: The Alchemy 1

by Mack; Icon

Kabuki follows a coded map to meet Akemi, whom she hopes will help her escape the shadows of the Noh and start a new life as someone else. David Mack's creative vision is staggering, his beautiful, genre-tripping art just as vibrant as his cleverly constructed script. This is literature presented in the comicbook form, rather than a comicbook writer aspiring to create literate comics, and it shows. There's a craft and intelligence and philosophical thoughtfulness, which, though not weighty, makes Kabuki complex, human and real. Published with no advert interruptions and a lengthy letters section, Kabuki is ideally suited to the Icon imprint. (IM) 9



Powers 4

by Bendis & Oeming; Icon

<++> Walker agrees to train the new Retro Girl, and tries to trace the kidnapped Deena. Some good Brian Michael Bendis dialogue, tense plotting, and sublime Michael Avon Oeming artwork. His slowly waking Deena is a riposte to the David Finch school of repeated shots, while the hostage scenes are all to die for, his loosely defined figures all the more menacing in their silhouettes and Peter Pantazis's colours blindingly electric. Masterful art, terrific plot pacing… superb. (IM) 9

<=> Walker confronts his youthful ward about her unlawful taking-on of Retro Girl's mantle, while Deena faces the consequences of her botched attempt to arrest a superpowered crook. It's great to see Bendis ground the series to the day-to-day cop action after the cataclysmic recent arcs, but he keeps the revelations coming on. Oeming is able to show off his chunky artwork and the murky shadows of the city as Bendis produces a surprisingly unverbose script. (MAT) 7

New X-Men: Academy X #3

by DeFilippis + Weir & Johnson
+ Ketchum + Parsons

<-> Lacking the charm of the 1980s New Mutants book, this series has a hard job on its hands convincing readers to stick around for the duration. Too many new characters have been introduced for us to have a clear handle on personalities and powers, or for their stories to get consistent coverage. One result of this sees many characters two-dimensionally scripted – they say their piece so quickly that meaning is distilled to the bluntest. The uneven art is not helping. Three diverse artists, yet none of them gives the pencils room to breathe or come alive. I'm unconvinced these difficulties will be overcome by this creative team. (IM) 4

New X-Men: Academy X #4

by DeFilippis + Weir
& Johnson + Koblish

<+> Two teams of student compete to find a mystery item, while romantic liaisons abound. Nunzio DeFilippis puts in a more coherent script this time but, with so many characters to develop, plots feel rushed and thus distance the reader. Staz Johnson's pencils are adequate, but choked by Scott Koblish's finishes (although dark-haired characters Josh and Dani fair better). This book has plenty of potential, but is struggling to harness it. (IM) 5

Powers 3

by Bendis & Oeming; Icon

<+> Walker confronts the new Retro Girl, while Deena confronts a Powers level 5 criminal. Brian Michael Bendis's script feels drawn out at times, but this is Michael Avon Oeming at his Powers' artistic peak. Aided by some brutally good colouring from Peter Pantazis, the pages have a grimy, celluloid city feel that takes the book to a different level. The figures and faces contain an innocence that contrasts powerfully with the bleak backgrounds, providing a tension in the artwork that's rarely seen elsewhere. (IM) 8

Rogue 1

by Rodi & Richards + Rapmund

Rogue returns to her hometown in Mississippi as yet another ongoing title is added to the X-Men stable. This is a pleasant-enough read with some nice artwork from Cliff Richards and Norm Rapmund, but with a slew of new X-Men spin-offs on the way, it is debatable whether this title will make much of an impact in the marketplace. (SH) 6

The Pulse 5

by Bendis & Bagley + Hanna

<+> Spider-Man, Luke Cage and a pregnant Jennifer Jones take on the Green Goblin, resolving the first arc. Despite the two fight scenes grabbing our attention, there are enough character moments to set this book apart. Mark Bagley's pencils have a sharper, less soppy feel to them, capturing the chaos of the Green Goblin's attack, while Scott Hanna's inks look less bubblegummy. Peter Pantazis does an impressive job on the colours, so they no longer look grafted on. An improving book. (IM) 7

<=> I was perhaps a little harsh in my last review when I suggested that the Pulse and the second Stone Roses album were equally bad. Having listened to the 'Second Coming' again last week I realise now there are a few good songs on it. Sadly the same can't be said for the slap-happy slug fest that is issue five of The Pulse. In a crazy parallel world somewhere all the people are happy all the time, beer is free, no one has to work for a living, and The Pulse is a good comic. Sadly we don't live there. (RN) 4

<+> Spidey, Jessica and Cage confront the manic Norman Osborn who faces being exposed as the Green Goblin in the conclusion to first arc of the Daily Bugle-based title. This doesn't have the same emotional impact as Brian Michael Bendis's previous Jessica Jones series, partly because of the less downbeat tone, but mainly due to Bagley's hopelessly inappropriate cartoony artwork. That Osborn's outing is also unimpressive is indicative of the title's failure. (MAT) 4

Runaways 17

by Vaughan & Alphona + Yeung

<+> Brian K. Vaughan's stand-out work for Marvel races towards its conclusion. With the traitor revealed – and one that, with hindsight, makes a great deal of sense – it's a race to see whom will be conscious when the Gibborim arrive. Adrian Alphona's pencils overegg the pudding, but these are dramatic pages; unfortunately they sometimes lack the detail needed. Christina Strain's colours are fetching, the artistic highlight. (IM) 7

She-Hulk 7

by Slott & Bobillo + Sosa

The Magistrati recruit She-Hulk as a cosmic judge. Dan Slott's plots are silly fun, but the OTT broad brush stroke humour won't appeal to all. Juan Bobillo's pencils are in on the joke, with a light touch appropriate to the material but which wouldn't suit other books. Not that it needs to. Unfortunately this tale isn't She-Hulk centred (she could be any quick-tempered character). When you're carrying the book, such anonymity is a problem. (IM) 6

Spectacular Spider-Man 18

by Jenkins & Ramos + Faucher

<-> Peter Parker feels weirdly sick, while Captain America relates Ana's origin to Nick Fury. Paul Jenkins script is tiresomely drawn out, but the pacing does give Peter's transformation additional freakiness. Humberto Ramos's chunky figures give Peter a gawky cuteness but looks ungainly on Cap and Fury, while some expressions seem awfully mock and sincere. (IM) 5

Spectacular Spider-Man 19

by Jenkins & Medina + Vlasco

<-> Peter Parker's horrifying transformation continues, while even writer Paul Jenkins makes jokes about how implausible Ana's WWII origins sound. Issues #18 and 19 could have been combined without significant loss, leaving me feeling ripped off. Studio F's aggressive colours undermine the first page's art, but is mostly well done. Paco Medina tries out Humberto Ramos's style but fails to find the sympathetic teen awkwardness that Ramos excels at, leaving these figures graceless and alien. (IM) 4

Spider-Man/Doctor Octopus: Year One 1

by Wells& Andrews

A great example of a cover reflecting the contents. The title promises the quality of Miller and Mazuchelli's work with Batman while the striking artwork successfully combines both cartoon humour and scratchy menace. There is also a subtle foreshadowing of the influence of Da Vinci on Doc Ock. Count the limbs! (JG) 8

Spider-Man/Doctor Octopus: Year One 2

by Wells& Andrews

<=> Inspired by Spider-Man and others to modify and improve his body, Otto Octavius devises a way to attach robotic arms to his spine. However, Otto's relationships with real people deteriorate and the framing of the art

goes a long way to expressing his loss of control at the climax of this issue. (JG) 8

Strange 1

by Straczynski + Barnes & Peterson

One of Stan Lee's more-overlooked creations, Doctor Strange, gets a new chronicle of his origin in this promising debut of a six-part miniseries. Writers J. Michael Straczynski and Sara (Samm) Barnes have crafted a strong opening chapter with Stephen Strange failing to keep his promise to return to help the poor of Tibet in order to open a plastic surgery clinic for the rich. Brandon Peterson provides some very expressive artwork, making this a book to watch. 8

Supreme Power 12

by Straczynski & Frank + Sibal

<++> Blur and Nighthawk investigate a vicious serial killer and recruit Hyperion; the psychotic Zarda eventually decides to put on a tiny tiny tiny tiny stolen dress. J. Michael Straczynski reintroduces the idea of having a plot, successfully using a split-screen format to roll the four primary strands, admitting a little dark humour and enjoyably emphasising the passage of time. Jon Sibal's inks give too many characters a frozen, plastic look, but doesn't choke all creative energies from Gary Frank's enjoyable but fraught pencils. (IM) 7

<=> Straczynski ups the pace a little by running four separate scenes at once throughout the issue, as the superpowered individuals discover that the project has been tested on less savoury characters. The plot may be taking a while to emerge, as Straczynski slowly builds things up, but his past record proves that it should be worth the wait. Frank's slick artwork may be great at superpowers, but it isn't quite dark enough for the tone of the script. (MAT) 7

Thor 84

by Oeming + Berman
& DiVito + Villari

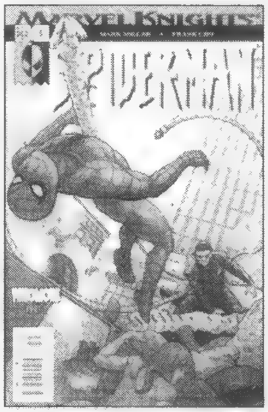
Thor and the OdinForce consider how to break the cycle of death, resurrection, Ragnarok, death again, and resurrection once more. Michael Avon Oeming and Daniel Berman's script feels windy, but has an underlying disciplined structure to it, taking us through contemplation to confrontation and, finally, brutal vengeance on Loki. The writing is coherent, but what makes this issue shine is Andrea DiVito giving the writing visual life with a masterful narrative style, intelligent and dramatic use of panel arrangement and an impressive sense of perspective. Two giants, one book, magic. (IM) 9

Ultimate Fantastic Four 10

by Ellis & Immonen
+ von Grawbadger

<-> Reed leads the team, chasing Van Damme. The characters have a winning charm the 616 versions often lack, especially Reed, but the drawn-out plot is ludicrous: surely no-one needs three pages (11 panels) to show the FantastiCar's lift-off? Stuart Immonen is struggling to match the brittle wonder of his first issues, but while I dislike his simplistic, cartoony armoured Doom, many other panels display impeccable tone and execution. Am I the only one not to enthuse about Adam Kubert's return? (IM) 6

<=> After Van Damme's remote-control attack on them, Reed rallies his friends to seek out their manic ex-colleague before the US Army gets to him. While more engaging than his opening arc, Warren Ellis still caters his script to the pace of an inevitable six-part collected paperback. It's still odd to see a teen Mr Fantastic, but Ellis uses it to make sense of the boy genius's inventions. (MAT) 7



Spider-Man 5

by Millar & Cho; Marvel Kights

Mark Millar has been having a great time giving Spider-Man his lumps, and how splendid that he's now joined by an artist who can match his ambition and brio. Frank Cho dazzles with his vivacity and the fluid gorgeousness of his line. And Mary Jane's chest is just everywhere. Notwithstanding the almost surreal cheerfulness of Laura Martin's palette, things have seldom looked so grim for Peter Parker. (MA) 8

<+> MJ tells Peter they have serious money trouble; and Spider-Man bumps into Doc Ock on the lam. Cho does pretty good, developing and expanding his style to suit a non-funnies book, a leap that's difficult to make; so it's disappointing then that it's married to such weak material. While Millar's script has some memorable sarcastic lines between Peter and Black Cat, the book is poorly plotted and the Doc Ock fight lazy, brief and completely gratuitous. Must do better. (IM) 5

Ultimate Spider-Man 65

by Bendis & Bagley + Hanna

Peter, MJ, Flash and Kong share a detention, in which their feelings for the dead Gwen Stacy are shared. Brian Michael Bendis's script has some effective moments, but doesn't veer far enough away from the heavily signposted schmaltz. Mark Bagley's too cute pencils look more out of place on such a passionate issue, and Scott Hanna's inks as usual do nothing to tone down the Bambi effect. Bagley's a talented artist, but his art's too controlled and sweet for what should be a raw issue. (IM) 5

Ultimate X-Men 50

by Vaughan & Kubert + Miki

<-> The X-Men visit the Coney Island fairground – with Wolverine literally biting off more than he can chew when he faces off against Gambit. Brian K. Vaughan's script may be patchy and long-winded, but there are a few snatched character moments to give it strength. Andy Kubert's pencils frequently miss the mark, but are competently average rather than bad, with a few good flourishes. There's a staggering lack of detail in some panels that pushes this reader away, and suggests a rush job. Not bad, but not good enough. (IM) 5

Ultimate X-Men 51

by Vaughan & Kubert + Miki + Dell

<++> Rogue escapes Gambit's clutches, only to walk into Wolfpack (!) and Fenris, who want to recruit her as an industrial saboteur. Brian K. Vaughan's story has too much plot to give a strong enough sense of character for the newcomers, but no doubt that will come. I'm no fan of the Kubert brothers' art, but here Andy's pencils are strong at scene-setting, ably helped by Justin Ponsor's dramatic colours. (IM) 6

Uncanny X-Men 448

by Claremont & Coipel + Hanna

<+> Viper kidnaps the team and toys with them in Arcade's Murderworld; why not just kill them, while helpless? Chris Claremont's 'exciting' plot ploy is hackneyed writing, but of reasonable execution. Olivier Coipel's faces are sometimes unnaturally square-cut (which Scott Hanna's inks unfortunately emphasise) and his fight scenes are stilted but his Bishop looks indomitable, and Coipel impresses as often as not. (IM) 5

Ultimate Nightmare 1

by Ellis & Hairsine + Coleby

ULTIMATE NIGHTMARE
1

It was inevitable that Warren Ellis would want his say on the Tunguska event. He's sacrificed the first issue to set-up. The threat is identified and the battle lines drawn up – Cap, Fury, Widow and Falcon vs Jean Gray, Wolverine and Colossus. It's all nuts and bolts preparation, necessary drudgery, with some amusing writer flourishes, and the art team looks ready for anything. Should be pretty good fun, when it gets started. (MA) 7

Something nasty landed in Tunguska that is broadcasting messages pushing people to suicide. Both Nick Fury and Xavier send in teams to investigate. Although full of atmosphere and tension, Ellis's writing is almost completely lacking in plot, so this new mini doesn't get off with the bang it should. Trevor Hairsine is a talented artist and conjures some forceful and stirring scenes, but taking three pages to illustrate one explosion is surely excessive. (IM) 5

There are some great Warren Ellis comics, and some foul smelly Warren Ellis comics that reek of five day old socks, and Ultimate Nightmare falls somewhere in between. Thankfully, given an established rosta of characters to play with, Ellis isn't able to give free reign to his preference for obnoxious anti-heroes, but he still does get to write derivative X-Files fiction. I mean, Tunguska? Doesn't he realise how many times that's been done before? What next, the dark mysteries of Atlantis and Stonehenge? Above average, but that doesn't count for much in an Ultimates title, right? (RN) 6

X-Men 159

by Austen & Larroca + Miki

<->Havok miraculously uses his powers to stabilise Xorn, while half the team splits off to retrieve his helmet from a military base. Chuck Austen's increasingly silly plot is only one problem here. His dialogue is mostly awkward and forced, and rarely in character. Salvadore Larroca's art feels rushed, while the work of the un-named colourists (presumably UDON) is annoyingly uneven. It gets increasingly difficult to justify buying this book. (IM) 2

X-Men 160

by Austen & Larroca + Miki

<++> Juggernaut and Iceman defend Havok and Xorn from the Chinese army, while the rest of the team is still trying to recover Xorn's spare helmet. Despite being pretty much all battle scenes, there are some interesting moments; but Chuck Austen now implies that Iceman and Nurse Annie had a full-blown affair, a new soap triangle that feels sprung from nowhere – one of the worst features of his X-Men run. Salvadore Larroca pencils a mean in-combat Iceman, and Danny Miki's inks are nowhere near as heavy on here as on the other side of the story. Improved, yes, marginally – but far from good (IM) 4

X-Men Unlimited 4

by Barnett & Foreman
+ Townsend + Foreman; Naifeh
& Tocchini + Hillsman II

<-> Scott gives Juggernaut a test on patience and temper control, while Emma Frost attends an old friend's wedding, with Wolverine as escort. Lee Barnett's tale suffers from its ending being decided before he knows how to get there, and just feels too worthy to interest – although penciller Travel Foreman does get a few impressive panels in. Ted Naifeh's wedding story has more spunk, but is barely more memorable. (IM) 5

X-Statix 26

by Milligan & Allred; Marvel Knights

<+> The team decides to retire, but takes one last job before closing up shop. This is a fitting end to a series that was one of Marvel's best, even if they didn't know what to do with it. It will be missed. (KG) 9

<++> The team takes one last payday before retiring – and winds up playing Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Peter Milligan's plot has a disappointingly obvious ending, barely balanced out by numerous smaller character moments. Mike Allred does a better job, superbly illustrating some crazy fights. While important scenes, like Doop and Vivisector's defeat, occur frustratingly off-panel, Milligan struggles to squeeze everything else in, suggesting this book needed a double-size celebration to go out in style. (IM) 8

<=> It's the final issue and the team goes down in a blaze of glory on a mission against mysterious and well-armed squatters. Milligan and Allred retire their celebrity mutants in an admittedly downbeat style. Although previous issues improved when characters were killed off, this one is less so, soured by the knowledge that they won't be returning. Will Milligan get away with controversial scripts on the main X-title, and will we see Allred's pop art superheroes again? Let's hope so. (MAT) 8

US Indies

Animation Magazine 138

by various; Animation Magazine

<=> Another feature-packed issue of this long

running and popular glossy magazine dedicated to all manner of animation. Garfield, comic and cartoon creator Bill Plympton and Batman toys are featured among the latest video games, cartoon shows and special effects-heavy movies. If you've an interest in animation and related fields, this is for you. (CEB) 7

Conversation 1

by Kochalka + Thompson; Top Shelf Productions

An odd one this, as lauded indie stars James Kochalka and Craig Thompson write and illustrate an exchange where they discuss the purpose and nature of creating comics. Both visualise themselves and their surroundings in a stylised manner with Kochalka's goofy elf boy and Thompson's concerned thinker journeying from the sea through caves and labyrinths. This could be interpreted as wordy artistic ego-massaging, but frequently makes for an interesting statement on both creators' mindsets and impulses. (MAT) 6

Deux Vitae 1

by Fujima; Tokyopop

Set in the near future, this 196-page £6.99 manga paperback introduces Ash, a psychic teen intent on leading humans against their machine masters. Weaving S&M (sex and mecha) and an emerging love story into the operatic plot, the striking graphics are certainly extravagant, albeit occasionally soulless. But, oh dear – some woefully hazy general storytelling is exacerbated by the densely detailed, grey-toned artwork being unsuitably printed in the publisher's smaller format here. At best impressive eye candy. (JE) 5

D.N.Angel 1

by Sugisaki; TokyoPop; $9.99

On his fourteenth birthday Daisuke discovers that he has a 'genetic curse', which makes him transform into legendary thief, Dark. To make matters worse, the way to activate and deactivate the curse is even more of a burden. A work full of energy and impulsiveness by Yukiru Sugisaki, and unlikely to disappoint any manga fan. (CEB) 7

Egg Story

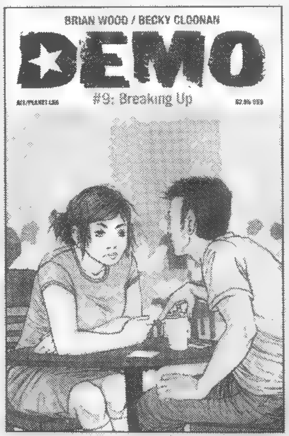
by Schmidt; Slave Labour Graphics

Five eggs see their friend fried, so they escape the fridge and go on the run. Filled with delightful and goofy humour, J Marc Schmidt's production is the coolest and funniest book I've read in far too long. Each egg takes on a personality of its own, from would-be ninja to fashion obsessive, casting light over humdrum lives. The simple black and white drawings emphasise the surreal nature of the strip without trying too hard to look surreal, but it's the clever, quick-humoured writing that means this book deserves to be a big hit. Charming. (IM) 9

Fade From Grace 1

by Benson & Amano; Beckett Books

When girlfriend Grace is trapped in a burning house, John discovers superpowers and rescues her. Narrated by Kate, this has a touching, realistic feel that makes Peter Parker feel arch. Gabriel Benson's script feels raw and natural, beautifully endowed by Jeff Amano's stunning art, ranging from magnificent half-lit pages of their romance to the powerfully but minimally coloured inferno. Despite the apparent simplicity of the visuals, there's a depth of heart and vision that makes this book superior. At just 99c, can you afford to miss this? (IM) 9



Demo 9: Breaking Up

by Wood & Cloonan; AIT/Planet Lar

<+> Gabe, who has a photographic memory of everything that's ever said to him, reflects on his break-up from Angie. In the hands of a lesser writer, such a script could be soapy, hand-wringing and self-consciously tear-jerkingly manipulative. Brian Wood, however, has a classier approach – which is still touching, at times awkward and confusing, and unafraid to show the romantic leads as prickley, self-obsessed and unstable. Becky Cloonan's art, as usual, steals the thunder, with some depressingly beautiful moments. (IM) 8

<+> A young couple comes to terms with the breakdown of their relationship, but the boy remembers every moment of their time together and is unable to let go. Bringing together his own bitter experiences of doomed romance, Wood writes another personal and rather unsettling story. Cloonan varies her style once more, using a more minimal brushstroke for a series of flashbacks that will strike a chord with many people. (MAT) 7

Freaks! – How to Draw Fantastic Fantasy Creatures

by Miller & Adams + various; Watson-Guptill Publications; $19.95

A luscious book which teaches the drawing of half-human half-animal fantasy characters. From teenage anteater to werewolves, few stones are left unturned, and the creatures beneath them even less so. With art by Arthur Adams, Brett Booth and Todd Nauck – accompanied by Steve Miller's clear, informative text – you're in very safe hands. Indispensable for aspiring comics artists. (CEB) 8

Love and Rockets 11

by Gilberto, Jaime & Mario Hernandez; Fantagraphics

<=> Three short pieces from Jaime this issue: a peculiar one-page sci-fi romance; a delightful wrestling story with Rena; and most impressively, a night out with Ray D as he pursues his infatuation with the frogmouth. There's virtuosity in his observation of the pitiless processes by which time and gravity claim us. He must look in his mirror with the unflinching courage of Rembrandt. There's some other stuff, but I'd sooner read Chuck Austen than Gilberto these days. (MA) 8

Love Fights 11

by Watson; Oni Press

<+> Nathaniel's true parenthood is revealed, along with Guthrie the cat's origin. Will Jack and Nora's relationship survive this news, and can Flamer beat Guthrie? Andi Watson's superb superhero rom-com is wonderful at satirising ridiculous mainstream stories, but fortunately just as good at crafting characters the reader cares and roots for, which Andi Watson's comely art gracefully sketches. (IM) 7

Masters of the Universe Volume 3 #3

by Scott & Santalucia + Fontana; MVCreations

<=> Evil-Lyn's predicament creates a series of events that draw in every major clan on Eternia. Being based on the cartoon is both a strength and a weakness. The former, because it brings with it a loyal fanbase; the latter because potential readers may dismiss it as kids' fare. Thanks to far darker scripting than the cartoon from Lori Ann Scott, and the mature art of Emiliano Santalucia and Enza Fontana, this could move into the top fantasy comic spot vacated by Bone. (CEB) 7

Ojo 1

by Kieth & Pardee; Oni Press

Sam Kieth applies his quirky imagination and pencilling skills to a brand new story, as a lonely young girl pets a very odd creature hidden between the floorboards. As usual Kieth's experimental layouts and style mirror his character's childlike view of the world, but also hints at something more sinister lurking in the shadows. (MAT) 8

Street Angel 3

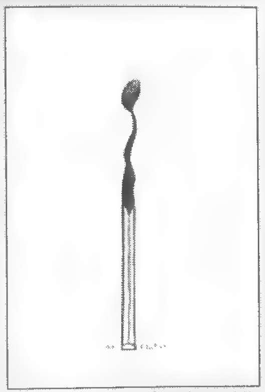
by Rugg & Maruca; Slave Labor Graphics

<+> When an injured Street Angel has to defend a church full of people against a gang of satanists, only the power of the Lord and her skateboard skills can stop her being married by the Devil! Thank God for Jesus! It's all enjoyably silly stuff, beautifully illustrated in a style somewhere between David Lapham and Farel Dalrymple, and quite frankly criminally overlooked by many – have you checked it out yet? (MT) 8

Love Fights 12

by Watson; Oni Press

<++> This superior romantic drama concludes with Jack and Nora trying to bring up baby Nathaniel, despite knowing his true parenthood. Andi Watson shows his storytelling strengths as he balances cool comedy scenes with heartfelt relationship-based drama. It's a satisfying end to a wonderful, cutely sketched, funny and affecting series. If you missed it monthly, be sure to get the trades. (IM) 8



<=> Watson concludes his heroville series as Jack and Nora cope with the aftermath of the Flamer's death, Future Feline and being left holding the baby. It's a pity that the series didn't reach its expected audience as Watson once again showed his ability to write skilfully crafted romance stories within the confines of a fantastical setting, while his deft brushwork captures the mood with the minimum of lines. (MAT) 8

Tozzer II #1

by Dunlop & Lumby; Ablaze Media

This is my first journey into the world of Ablaze Media's magician, Tozzer, so I can be forgiven for not being sure what creature this comic is meant to be: all round comedy, sly satirical, zany irrelevance, or all three. This is due in part to a plot that jumps around too much, yet there is enough energy to make this readable, and Peter Lumby's top art certainly helps. I think the best is yet to come. (CEB) 6

Worldwatch 1

by Austen & Derenick + Rapmund; Wild and Wooly Press

This new offering from Chuck Austen chronicles the adventures and private lives of the Worldwatch team, as told by team leader War Woman. It's an involving soap opera affair, and while it's smut level is certainly noticeably high there's a great comic hiding under the surface, with plenty of characters and subplots to keep the reader interested. The dynamically busty art is clear and uncluttered and Austen actually shines as a hero team writer here, which is particularly surprising if you've read his Marvel team books. Check this comic out if you see it, this guy's actually good! (MT) 7

UK Indies

Bricktop A1 Special

by Fabry + Smith; Atomeka

This curious volume reprints the six parts of Glenn Fabry and Chris Smith's Bricktop from 1989-1992. The loose, knockabout comedy plot concerns British teenager Losey Wales and her layabout friends getting in and out of scrapes with drunks, supermarket trolleys and Christian fundamentalist vivisectionists. It's not hampered by the earnestness of a lot of 1980s non-genre comics with a real-world setting, and Glenn Fabry's art is always excellent. (DK) 6

Springheeled Jack 2

by Hitchcock; Black Boar Press

<++> David Hitchcock's tale of bug-like body snatchers in Victorian England gathers pace. Aided by the many greys of his black and white art, there's unnervingly creepy suspense. Although well-plotted, there are times when the script feels weighed down, but fortunately those brief lapses are balanced by flashes of brilliance. A fabulous mix of gothic and camp horror, it's a real treat. (IM) 8

UK Titles

Modesty Blaise: Mister Sun

by O'Donnell, Holdaway; Titan Books

I'm in my happy place right now, because Titan Books is once again issuing the impressive canon of Modesty Blaise newspaper strips to a new generation of readers and old fans alike. Any one of these books is an example in pure storytelling the hard way using a rigid format of three panels per day. In an age where superstar artists are given wide expanses of canvas to work on, it's good to look back and see what can be achieved on a more minimalist format by a well-matched writer/artist team. Us Brits can be rightly proud of these comics. (RN) 8

UK Newsstand

Action Man 114

by Quinn & Ross; Panini Comics

<=> This issue the action moves from Island X to the Sahara Desert, where we find Dr X testing out his mind control gas. It's not long until Action Force is hot on his trail. A solid and entertaining read as always, and in the games and features section, I especially enjoyed the clever Snake Eyes. (CEB) 7

Astonishing Spider-Man 116

by various; Panini UK

<=> Another excellent issue, with the welcome bonus of Milligan and Fegredo's *Flowers For Rhino*, sandwiched by the usual Straczynski and Lee/Ditko strips. My only gripe is that Panini skips straight to ASM v2 #37, denying readers the opportunity to make up their own minds up about JMS's 9/11 story. (KM) 8

The Avengers United 44

by various; Panini UK

<+> *The Kang War* moves up yet another gear as the current clutch of foes are defeated, with more lining up to tackle the exhausted heroes. Good to see Jack of Hearts, Stingray and Firebird in the spotlight. The archive strip reprints v1 #100's romp through Olympus, featuring Barry Smith's version of every Avenger of the time. (KM) 7

Batman: Legends 12

by various; Panini UK

<-> Given the usual high standard, a slightly disappointing issue. Best of the bunch is *Bruce Wayne – Rest In Peace* from #242; worst is the same issue's solo Robin strip which confusingly feels like (and may be) the second part of an unseen story. Oh yes, and *Hush* concludes. Ho hum. (KM) 6

Doctor Who Magazine 347

by Gray + Geraghty; Panini UK

<=> *The Flood* continues as the Doctor is mistaken for Lawrence Llewelyn-Bowen (!), companion Destrii makes new friends and the Cybermen finally (and literally) reveal themselves to a bemused Camden Lock populace. A top quality UK comic strip that deserves a wider audience beyond hardcore Who fans. (KM) 7

Essential X-Men 116

by Morrison + Quitely/
Claremont + Larocca; Panini UK

<+> Grant Morrison shows how to write a good *'Nuff Said* story, before immediately launching into *Imperial*, with an equally gripping and hilarious cliffhanger. X-Men stories haven't been this rewarding for a long time. X-Treme feels like an anachronism by comparison: though Larocca's layouts are gorgeous, his figure work is less so. (KM) 8

Judge Dredd
The Megazine 223

by various; Rebellion

<--> The final part of *Kuss Hard* is a come-down, but Carlos Ezquerra creates some startling visuals in the appalling meat factory and the 'spaghetti western' look of Izzy Kuss nevertheless. The ending of *Black Siddha* starts well, but suffers from an overabundance of improbable verbiage. *Helltrekkers* comes to an end, while the horror of The Great War continues in *Charley's War*. The best thing in this issue is *The Simping Detective*. (DK) 7

A1
A1: BIG ISSUE 0
A1

A1: Big Issue 0

by various; Atomeka

Reprinting five stories from the A1 anthology series, featuring Alan Moore and Steve Parkhouse's *The Bojeffries Saga* from *Warrior*. There's also *Shark-man* which features immaculate Steve Pugh artwork and reads like the sort of vintage adventure strip that used to pad out Fleetway annuals, a charming *Flaming Carrot* story, a slight mood piece by Steve Dillon, and an alternative take on a superhuman's predicament by Dave Gibbons and Ted McKeever. (DK) 6

Hardly worth a 10-year wait. Atomeka returns in its poor man's Warrior role with a stack of reprints of material readily available in their original form. Considering how things have moved on in the last decade, editors Dave Elliot and Garry Leach desperately need to lose their 1980s roots if they expect to compete in a post-com.x world. New vision (and direction) needed: under 40s only need apply. (TM) 3

This anthology of curios from the erratic publisher mixes whimsical and satire with serious to provide a very mixed bag. Moore's The Bojeffries Saga, reprinted with its bat-hunting prologue, sees a rent collector visit a house of horror (which suits Parkhouse's caricature-ish art), an interesting idea, lazily executed. Gibbons' 'Survivor' is well-plotted and intriguing, but guilty of a hackneyed script while Pugh's artwork on 'Shark-Man' is sophisticated and dramatic, outshining a lethargic plot. The Flaming Carrot superhero satire briefly amuses. Dillon's 'Kathleen's House' is the real gem, a heartfelt reflection on lost love that lingers on after the book is closed. (IM) 6

The Mighty World of Marvel Volume 3 #21

by various; Panini UK

<-> More SHIELD action as Nick Fury, Captain America, Mr Fantastic and The Thing take on the Yellow Claw's invasion force. DD clashes with the Punisher in *Child's Play*, while Bruce Banner and the Hulk are separated for the first time in *If I Kill You – I Die!* A solid issue. (KM) 7

Spectacular Spider-Man 104

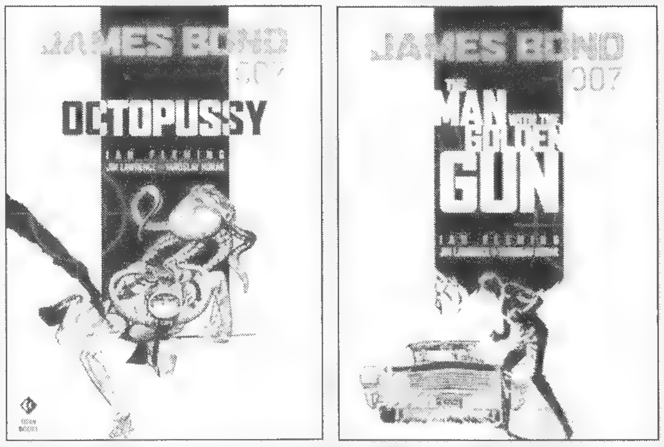
by Royle & Georgiou + various;
Panini Comics

<=> The Rhino's on the rampage, but if only it was ever that easy for Spidey ... as another villain lurks waiting to strike too. With loads of action and always fantastic and accurate takes on much-loved Marvel characters, this fun-packed publication never disappoints. (CEB) 7

2000 AD Progs 1403-1406

by various; Rebellion

<-> *Judge Dredd* trundles along, while *Strontium Dog* gives way to *Future Shocks*. *Caballistics Inc* has continuity buffs poring over the details regarding its slew of genre movie references. *Bec & Kawl* proves an asset, and not a liability. *ABC Warriors* is bonkers entertainment, but spends too long mourning one annoying civilian, slowing the action down before going on hiatus. New *Strontium Dog*, *Robo-Hunter* and *Asylum* stories begin in Prog 1406. (DK) 8



The Man With the Golden Gun, Octopussy and The Living Daylights

by Fleming & Lawrence + Horak; Titan Books

More 1960s newspaper strips, following hot on the heels of the lovely Modesty Blaise package issued by Titan. These are period adaptations of the latter books written by Ian Fleming just before he died and therefore they capture Bond at his original late fifties/ early sixties style, a million miles from the glossy hi-tech setting we're used to today. This is more *The Talented Mr Ripley* in look than 1990s GQ magazine, and it faithfully captures the authentic feel of the original tales: low on gadgets and special effects but high on atmosphere and story telling. Check 'em out for a very different view of Bond than what you're probably used to. (RN) 8

Ultimate Spider-Man 33

by Bendis + Hairsine & Miki;
Panini UK

<=> Norman Osborn attempts to seduce then blackmail Spider-Man into joining the 'dark side' before exacting revenge on the White House administration. Some epic scenes here and a sense that The Ultimates have a real fight on their hands. Both Trevor Hairsine's art and John Cassaday's cover are superb. (KM) 8

Ultimate X-Men 19

by various; Panini UK

<=> Xavier and Magneto swap philosophies in a sequence realised equally well in the X-movies. In the second story, Wolverine is targeted for execution and seeks refuge in Peter Parker's basement, inevitably drawing the teenager into the line of fire. The lack of a UK-produced contents page annoyingly omits David Finch's contribution. (KM) 8

Wolverine & Gambit 103

by various; Panini UK

<+> Tieri and Chen focus on reality TV survival shows, the presence of the cannibalistic Mauvais ensuring no one survives this game! Not a particularly strong story, hampered by part two being a *'Nuff Said* tie-in. Gambit/Bishop thankfully concludes, with Stryfe's self-sacrifice seemingly a last ditch attempt to provide substance. Why bother? (KM) 5

Small Press

The Book of Lists

by Rainey;
£1.50 from P. Rainey
1 Bentall Close , Willen
Milton Keynes MK15 9HB

Printed black and white version of the online comic (www.bookoflists.co.uk). A collection of lists of recurring themes in the artist's life. Strangely compelling, funny, entertaining and honest. Aesthetically, the strips work better in colour (as it appears on the site), but essentially the comic is just as good in print form. (LO) 9

Thrud the Barbarian 3

by Critchlow;
P.O. Box 371, Southport PR8 6YE

<--> The slimmest of plots features the return of The Black Currant, a character from Thrud's *White Dwarf* days. This story has less of the sparkling wit that graced issues 1 and 2, but will no doubt appeal to fans of the mighty lummox all the same. Like all of Carl Critchlow's recent work, this features some beautiful artwork, especially a splash page of the antagonists in armed combat. (DK) 6

Tuppenny Rice 1

by Cameron Kerr;
£1.20 from www.tuppennyrice.co.uk

A collection of short erratic strips. A frantic mix of goth/surreal humour. Reading this was like being on a train of thought as it veered wildly off the tracks. A bit hit and miss with some occasional strokes of genius and hilarity. (LO) 7

Comics Economics

Top 100 US comicbook sales for May 2004

Astonishing X-Men in at #1

Rank	Prior	Title, Issue, Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(N)	**Astonishing X-Men #1** $2.99 (209,389)	Marvel
2	(1)	**Superman #205** $2.50 (208,105)	DC Comics
3	(2)	**Superman/Batman #10** $2.95 (178,865)	DC Comics
4	(32)	**Secret War Book Two** $3.99 (116,611)	Marvel
5	(14)	**Uncanny X-Men #444** $2.25 (112,129)	Marvel
6	(7)	**X-Men #157** $2.25 (107,185)	Marvel
7	(3)	**Marvel Knights Spider-Man #2** $2.99 (99,320)	Marvel
8	(=)	**Ultimate X-Men #45** $2.25 (96,698)	Marvel
9	(8)	**Ultimate X-Men #46** $2.25 (96,652)	Marvel
10	(12)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #58** $2.25 (90,963)	Marvel

Superman at #2

11	(10)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #59** $2.25 (89,863)	Marvel
12	(15)	**Amazing Spider-Man #507** $2.25 (81,944)	Marvel
13	(16)	**Batman #627** $2.25 (76,885)	DC Comics
14	(N)	**New X-Men: Academy #1** $2.99 (76,416)	Marvel
15	(13)	**Batman #628** $2.25 (74,348)	DC Comics
16	(N)	**Excalibur #1** $2.99 (71,757)	Marvel
17	(18)	**JLA #98** $2.25 (69,365)	DC Comics
18	(17)	**JLA #99** $2.25 (69,058)	DC Comics
19	(19)	**Wolverine #15** $2.25 (68,728)	Marvel
20	(22)	**Teen Titans #11** $2.50 (67,812)	DC Comics
21	(24)	**Supreme Power #10** $2.99 (63,292)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000			
22	(26)	**Avengers #82** $2.25 (55,711)	Marvel
23	(22)	**Avengers #83** $2.25 (55,280)	Marvel
24	(29)	**Daredevil #60** $2.99 (54,012)	Marvel
25	(31)	**Spectacular Spider-Man #14** $2.25 (51,036)	Marvel
26	(29)	**Fantastic Four #513** $2.25 (50,936)	Marvel
27	(34)	**Conan #4** $2.99 (50,759)	Dark Horse
28	(27)	**Adventures of Superman #628** $2.50 (49,675)	DC Comics
29	(25)	**Action Comics #815** $2.50 (49,463)	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000			
30	(62)	**Robin #126** $2.25 (48,361)	DC Comics
31	(57)	**Punisher #6** $2.99 (48,576)	Marvel
32	(N)	**Secret War Book One** $3.99 (47,792)	Marvel
33	(=)	**Wolverine/Punisher #3** $2.99 (47,699)	Marvel
34	(N)	**Firestorm #1** $2.50 (46,292)	DC Comics
35	(N)	**District X #1** $2.99 (45,439)	Marvel
36	(=)	**Incredible Hulk #72** $2.25 (45,385)	Marvel
37	(35)	**Flash #210** $2.25 (45,354)	DC Comics
38	(N)	**Witchblade/Wolverine One-Shot** $2.99 (43,863)	Image
39	(38)	**Pulse #3** $2.99 (43,656)	Marvel
40	(42)	**Outsiders #12** $2.50 (43,432)	DC Comics
41	(44)	**JSA #61** $2.50 (43,088)	DC Comics
42	(N)	**Darkness/Hulk One-Shot** $2.99 (40,400)	Image
43	(N)	**JLA: Another Nail #1** $5.95 (40,349)	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000			
44	(N)	**Offical Handbook: X-Men 2004** $3.99 (39,380)	Marvel
45	(49)	**Exiles #46** $2.99 (38,788)	Marvel
46	(45)	**Exiles #47** $2.99 (38,327)	Marvel
47	(48)	**Captain American #26** $2.99 (37,558)	Marvel
48	(50)	**Batman: Gotham Knights #53** $2.95 (37,305)	DC Comics
49	(40)	**NYX #4** $2.99 (37,025)	Marvel
50	(47)	**Cable/Deadpool #3** $2.99 (36,820)	Marvel
51	(53)	**Superman: Birthright #10** $2.95 (35,052)	DC Comics
52	(55)	**Detective Comics #794** $2.95 (34,813)	DC Comics
53	(N)	**Soulfire #0** $2.50 (34,352)	ASP
54	(59)	**Green Arrow #38** $2.50 (34,037)	DC Comics
55	(51)	**Captain America & The Falcon #3** $2.99 (33,975)	Marvel
56	(=)	**Green Lantern #177** $2.25 (33,391)	DC Comics
57	(52)	**Alpha Flight #3** $2.99 (32,584)	Marvel
58	(54)	**Birds of Prey #67** $2.50 (31,546)	DC Comics
59	(46)	**Spider-Man Unlimited #3** $2.99 (31,661)	Marvel
60	(53)	**Emma Frost #11** $2.99 (31,269)	Marvel
61	(73)	**Nightwing #93** $2.25 (30,816)	DC Comics
62	(66)	**Thor #78** $2.99 (30,562)	Marvel
63	(58)	**Wonder Woman #204** $2.25 (30,377)	DC Comics
64	(60)	**Thor #79** $2.99 (30,270)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000			
65	(71)	**GI Joe #29** $2.95 (29,847)	Devils Due
66	(57)	**She Hulk #3** $2.99 (29,662)	Marvel
67	(70)	**Mystique #14** $2.99 (29,439)	Marvel
68	(77)	**Hawkman #28** $2.50 (29,332)	DC Comics
69	(65)	**GI Joe #30** $2.95 (29,224)	Devils Due
70	(67)	**Mystique #15** $2.99 (28,940)	Marvel
71	(71)	**Thanos #10** $2.99 (28,809)	Marvel
72	(41)	**Superman/Batman #8** $2.95 (28,347)	DC Comics
73	(75)	**Iron Man #81** $2.99 (28,232)	Marvel
74	(=)	**Iron Man #83** $2.99 (28,055)	Marvel
75	(72)	**Iron Man #82** $2.99 (28,002)	Marvel
76	(94)	**Weapon X #23** $2.99 (27,348)	Marvel
77	(81)	**Venom #14** $2.99 (27,571)	Marvel
78	(N)	**GI Joe: Master & Apprentice #1** $2.95 (27,448)	Devils Due
79	(78)	**Weapon X #24** $2.99 (27,286)	Marvel
80	(77)	**Venom #15** $2.99 (26,917)	Marvel
81	(74)	**GI Joe: Reloaded #3** $2.95 (26,917)	Devils Due
82	(=)	**Y: The Last Man #22** $2.95 (26,771)	DC Comics
83	(52)	**DC: New Frontier #4** $6.95 (26,441)	DC Comics
84	(87)	**Batgirl #52** $2.50 (26,418)	DC Comics
85	(92)	**Fables #25** $2.50 (25,526)	DC Comics
86	(N)	**The Authority: More Kev #1** $2.95 (25,510)	DC Comics
87	(86)	**Aquaman #18** $2.50 (25,357)	DC Comics
88	(76)	**Iron Fist #3** $2.99 (24,972)	Marvel
89	(97)	**Legion #33** $2.50 (24,665)	DC Comics
90	(99)	**Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #179** $2.50 (24,618)	DC
91	(84)	**Swamp Thing #3** $2.95 (24,542)	DC Comics
92	(98)	**Catwoman #31** $2.50 (24,250)	DC Comics
93	(85)	**Transformers: Energon #23** $2.95 (24,234)	DreamWave
94	(83)	**Marvel Age: Spider-Man #3** $2.25 (24,180)	Marvel
95	(90)	**Silver Surfer #9** $2.99 (24,142)	Marvel
96	(80)	**Batman: Harley & Ivy #2** $2.50 (24,280)	DC Comics
97	(86)	**X-Statix #23** $2.99 (24,080)	Marvel
98	(94)	**Marvel Age: Spider-Man #4** $2.25 (23,442)	Marvel
99	(95)	**Thor: Son of Asgard #4** $2.99 (22,698)	Marvel
100	(N)	**Richard Dragon #1** $2.50 (21,866)	DC Comics

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Phantom Patrol

David Simpson via e-mail

EARLY **2000AD** annuals and specials contained a strip called *Phantom Patrol*, about a group of WWII British soldiers who were lost in time equipped only with their landing craft and some alien technology. It was clearly a reprint from the early- to mid-Sixties, but I've no idea where it first appeared.

I also suspect it was originally published under another name. Can anybody help?

Acme Press

Rod Mearing via e-mail

BACK in 1987 Acme Press printed a first story of Serge Bosman/Marc Michetz's *Kogaratsu*. Were there any other English translations of this series printed?

Gibbons' Madness

Mark Badham-Moore via e-mail

I'VE JUST bought the album 'The Madness' (1988) on CD, my tape of it being on its last legs.

Now, I have noticed before that Dave Gibbons and Rian Hughes are credited as producing the sleeve using the Veidt method, but finally I'm too intrigued to let it slip by again. So, how did Dave become involved with Madness and what exactly is the 'Veidt method'?

Hopefully, if Dave or Ryan are reading this, we'll have an answer next month!

IPC at DC

Robert Bagley via e-mail

THERE'S been a lot of talk on the internet about Alan Moore reviving some of the old Fleetway/IPC comics characters for DC/WildStorm.

Care to give a rundown on likely contenders? (Oh, and is this really the same Alan Moore who said he'd never work for DC again and retired to much fanfare last year?)

Ah, Robert, you forget. This is comics where nothing is permanent. As for likely contenders, take your pick from a few highpoints from the big five...

***LION** gave us such gems as private detective **Brett Marlowe**, the space ship pilot **Captain Condor**, **Karl the Viking**, superstrong crusader **Maroc the Mighty**, fighter pilot **Paddy Payne**, superhero **The Phantom Viking**, **Robot Archie**, the 400-year old alchemist **The Spellbinder**, criminal genius **The Spider**, and ace motorbike cop **Zip Nolan**.*

***SMASH** gave us black magic heavy **Cursitor Doom**, master escapologist **Janus Stark** and superhero **Tri-Man**.*

***THUNDER** included the eternal **Adam Eterno**, World War One nastie **Black Max** and the **Steel Commando**.*

***TIGER**: **The Black Archer**, **Olac the Gladiator**, the sci-fi strip **Jet-Ace Logan**, **Saber - King of the Jungle**, and daredevil driver **Skid Solo**.*

***VALIANT**: **Captain Hurricane** (Royal Marine and Axis basher), **House of Dolmann** (master puppeteer with a house full of mechanical crime-fighting dolls), **Kelly's Eye** (the nigh-invulnerable Tim Kelly and his stone of destiny), **The Steel Claw** (invisible Lewis Crandell and his all-powerful steel hand).*

*Then there's **Jet**, **Action**, **Tornado** and the humour titles, like **Buster** with Maxwell Hawke, Leopard of Lime Street, Fishboy and Galaxus, and let's not forget Grimly Fiendish and Frankie Stein.*

Ah, the list is endless. Over 50 years of heritage, and all America gives us is a bloody mini-series!

Answer Updates

Readers provide answers for previous issues' questions

A Day in the Life of Marvel Comics

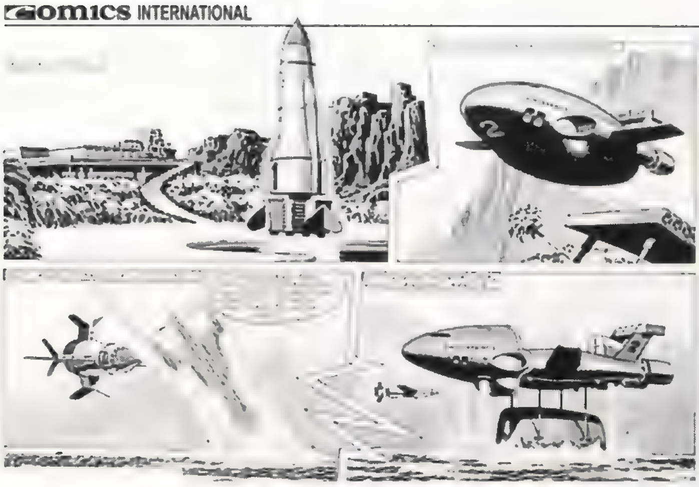
Leigh Hunt via e-mail

IN ANSWER to J.O. Carr's question in **CI** #175 about *A Day in the Life of Marvel Comics*. It appeared in **Marvel Age** #35, February 1986.

A Day in the Life of Marvel Comics, take II

C.E. Smith
'The Coppers', Sicklesmere Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 2BN

IN ANSWER to J.O. Carr's query about the Marvel Age issue featuring *A Day in the Life of Marvel Comics*, it was in issue 35 and was written by Kurt Busiek (with help from others). If your enquirer is looking for a copy, I can let him have it for the cost of postage (plus a whole bunch of other **Marvel Age** issues I'm shedding).



Brian Lewis

Justin Davison via e-mail

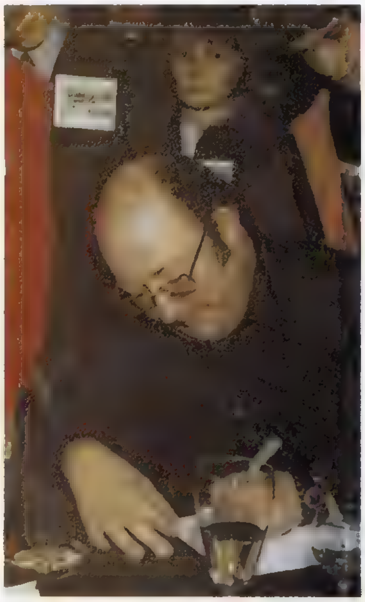
WAS there ever a magazine called **Shudder**? I have a painting by (the great) Brian Lewis and don't know if it's an interior or cover.

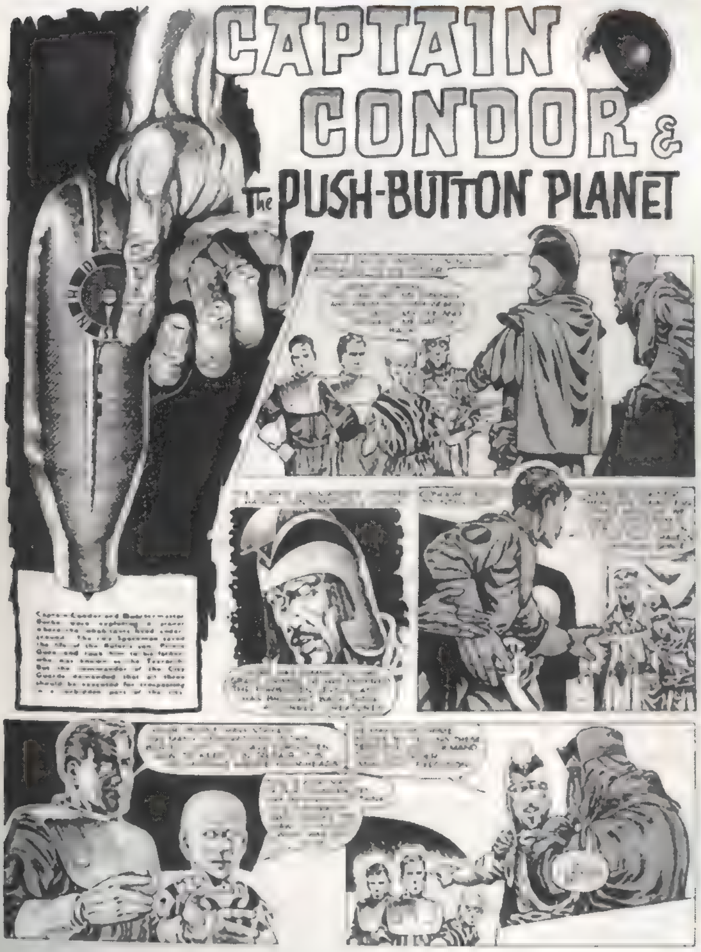
A while back you did a biog of him but could you find a photo of him to print as well?

He was fantastic and sorely underrated! Maybe a book about him would be appropriate?

Afraid we all draw a blank on ***Shudder****. But here's a 1979 photo of Brian taken at Mike Conroy and Dez Skinn's Fantasy Film Festival.*

As for being underrated, we know what you mean, but not to readers of 1950s ***New Worlds*** *SF magazine and its ilk, or 1960s Captain Condor (in* ***Lion****), or 1970s* ***House of Hammer*** *he certainly wasn't! He drew a pretty mean looking Thunderbirds, too.*

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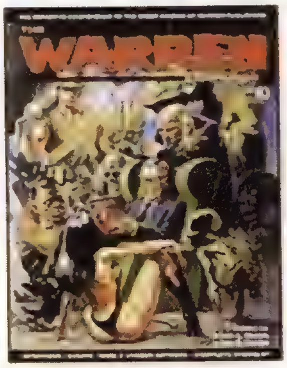

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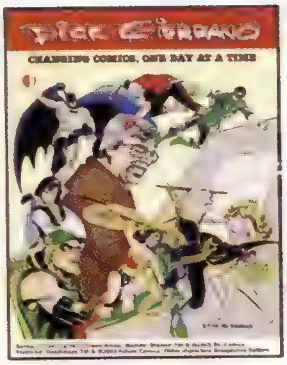

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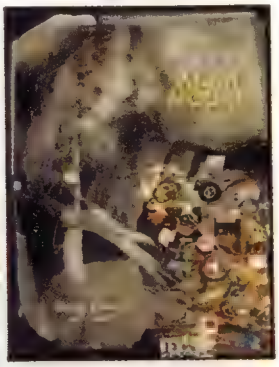

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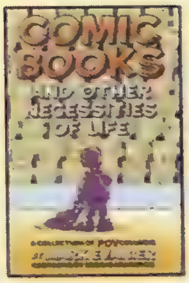

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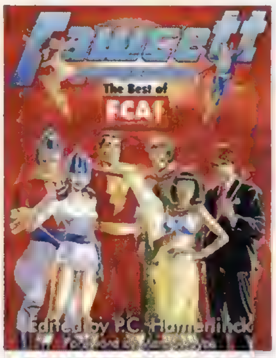

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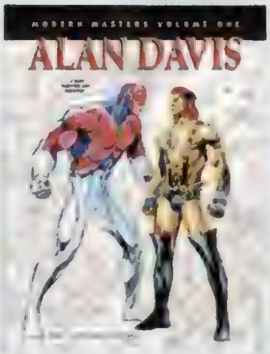

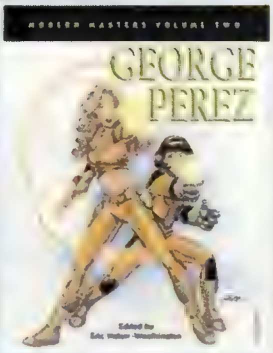

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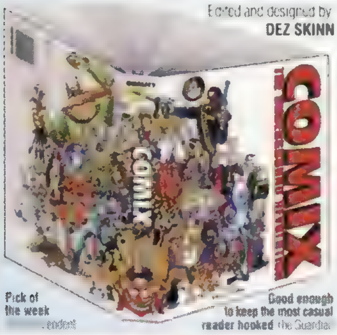

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OPENS MIDDAY

Letters

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

Warren Ellis critic

J.J. Chance
5 North Parade, Bath BA1 1LF

I SEE from the latest issue of **CI** that Warren Ellis's star continues to rise but apart from the obvious fact that there is a market for his writing there seems little else to justify his current status.

He constantly appropriates the ideas and style of a variety of writers, from Hunter S. Thompson to Nigel Kneale, Philip K. Dick to his own contemporaries, including Grant Morrison. Whether this is cryptamnesia, homage or at worst plagiarism I'm still unsure.

His own effort is to then camouflage this situation by concocting a shopping list of techno-babble and pop science cobbled together from his subscription to **The New Scientist** and what he found that day on Google. Beyond this his lightweight scripts seem to mold time itself by having the power of extending a 10-page introduction into an entire issue.

The recent **Ultimate Nightmare** is a good example; here I assume he is under specific orders to pad this out for a six-issue-sized trade paperback. Maybe I'm being too critical and he just has a wonderful literary sleight of hand?

Take **Planetary** for instance; by the end of an issue you feel as though a lot has happened. But on re-reading you find Ellis really has stopped time like his character Ambrose Pierce and that he's just surviving on the beautiful artwork of John Cassaday.

And now we are presented with yet another high-end graphic novel, **Stealth Tribes**. Oh, dear me. The premise reads like the stoned ramblings of a buffoon in the tent next door to you at a festival.

There's nothing worse than reading insincere work, and when Ellis writes about narcotics use you always feel that it's all second hand, culled from somebody else's experiences.

I'm not advocating drug use, but I do get the feeling that he wants so hard to be seen as the edgy Brit, but ends up as that bloke who stinks of fags and sits at the end of the bar on his own collaring tourists on their way in...

Now that's one seriously bitchy letter. Ease off "JJ", what's Ellis ever done to you for such vitriol? This isn't by any chance sour grapes from a failed writer hiding behind a pseudonym, is it?

Surely you opening paragraph says it all. "Warren Ellis's star continues to rise... there is a market for his writing." What's this "apart from the obvious fact" all about? What more does he/his public/his publisher need to "justify his current status".

He's a family man whose taken on free-lance writing as a commercial career who enjoys pushing barriers. Good luck to him, I say. You seem to want totally original ideas, fine, the comics graveyard is packed with them. The trick is combining the familiar with the fantastic and, for my money, Warren's done a whole lot more in moving comics forward than a handful of "originals".

Man, what a start to a letters column. I was looking forward to reading a sheaf of bright and breezy witty commentaries and Loriann led with yours. If it wasn't so late, I'd drop the whole letter. Bitch, bitch, bitch.

And let's have no more of these dodgy (and cowardly) nom de plumes. ...Dez

Debilerate mistakes

Craig Mitchell, Newcastle Upon Tyne

WITH reference to issue 176's *Q&A* "Overstreet Boo-boos": I had heard before about deliberate mistakes in price guides but must admit I've never looked carefully enough to find one definitely.

I can understand the reasons why it is done but it still seems pretty dumb. Surely the point of a reference book is to give correct information. What if dictionaries and encyclopaedias did the same thing? Can anyone imagine a recipe book substituting false ingredients just to maintain and check copyright?

In the same issue, a letter from Richard Domar (commenting, in turn, on Martin Averre's column in #175) says it is a sad indictment of the comics scene that comics are no longer "a viable hobby for investment purposes".

Personally, I buy comics to read and enjoy them. I'm not even considering how much I might make back on them just as I don't with CDs or DVDs or books.

My dictionary defines hobby as "favourite occupation as pastime". Nothing about making money from it. Isn't that attitude what caused the problems with die-cut, hologram, foil-cover, limited editions etc in the '90s.

Now that's a sad indictment of the comics scene! Pleasure not profit, please.

Now that's better. Opinionated, with the odd pop, but straight up and down.

Gone in a Flash!

Ron Bennett, Harrogate

Dear Mr Skinn,

I really enjoy your little chat column. I'm always filled with wonder and admiration for the manner in which you continue to be so enthusiastic about comic books and the comic industry.

I was particularly interested in the manner in which you first encountered comics. Some 40 years ago, I, too was holidaying with my parents in the Yorkshire coastal resort of Scarborough.

I'd just spent up at Corrigan's Amusement Park and was returning to the Grand Hotel which at that time was owned, as you probably know by Tom Laughton, Charles Laughton's brother, when I passed a newsagent's shop displaying some interesting looking magazine covers.

Close inspection revealed that these were a genre completely new to me, namely comicbooks. One in particularly immediately took my fancy, number 112 of **The Flash**, which featured an athletic looking man dressed in a red leotard of sorts. Awesome, really awesome.

It took my fandu to such a degree that I was unable to sleep and at the earliest opportune moment the following day I managed to prise a little money from my father and returned to the newsagnt's to acquire this item of magic and wonder.

It had gone! Someone had beaten me to the punch and had bought it. As you can imagine, I was devastated, so disappointed in fact from that day to this I have never looked at a single comicbook.

And now, by cheer chance, I have read your *Sez Dez* column in **Comics International** and find you were the person responsible for the long empty years I have suffered without the sheer joy of reading any comic book offering.

It's only fair, I feel, that you now sell me your copy. I will match your outlay amd pay the price for which you bought the comic. It is, after all, rather old now, second hand and probably well read into the bargain.

Poor Ron. Never discovering stories told in pictures he ended up writing real books.

But he did find a nice publisher, kind enough to set up a website for him at www.cosmos-books.com/bennett.html

Poor Ron.

Within the House of Ideas...

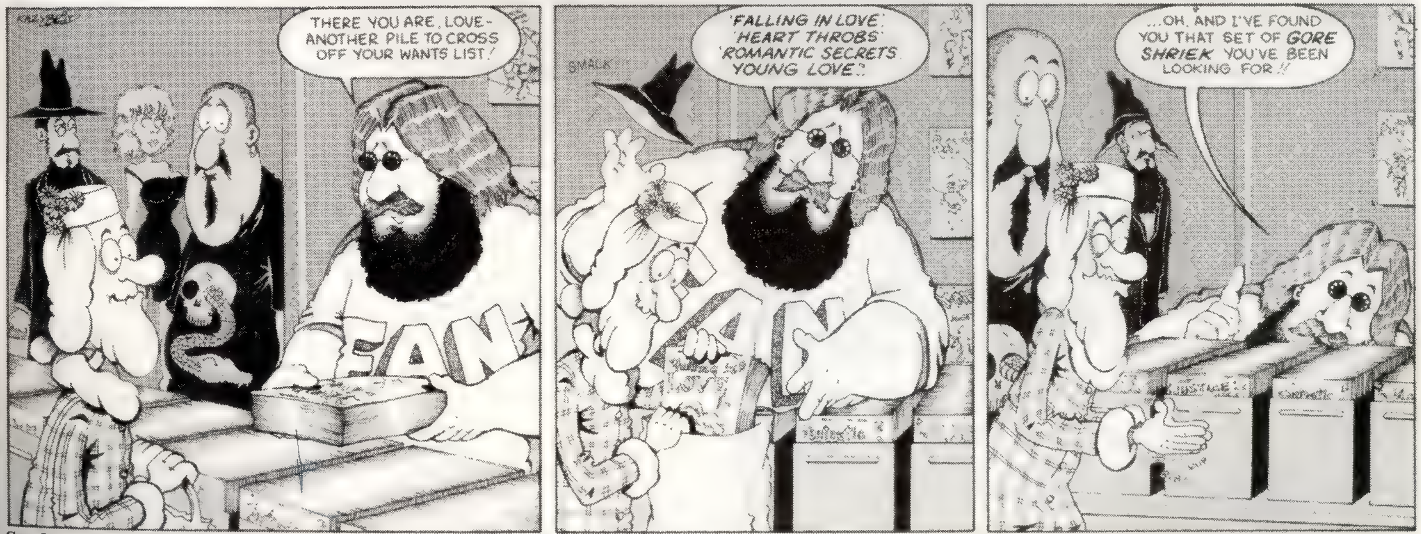
Neil Madle, Wiltshire

A DAY in the life of Marvel Editorial, circa six months ago:

Editorial lackey 1: 'Uh, boss?'
JQ: 'What is it, minion?'
EL1: 'Well, you know how you're always urging us to succeed despite ourselves, to remain Number One while alienating our readers...'

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS

Script by Paul Kristian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JQ: 'That's my mission, oh small one. Bill J and I had a great time doing it. Now it's just me, I plan to continue our life's work.'

EL1: 'Well, I've got a great idea. I guarantee you'll love it.'

JQ: 'What, even better than flexographic printing, the New Universe and assistant editors' month? Remember, this company boasts a proud legacy of truly stupid ideas.'

EL1: 'Undoubtedly, oh chubby master. This is really gonna tick people off.'

JQ: 'Yeah, both truly crass ideas that we managed to swing by the readers with barely a dip in circulation. It must really rile the Devilish Competition that we can be so mind-numbingly stupid and still keep the top spot. I love it.'

EL1: 'And you'll love this one, JQ.'

JQ: 'I didn't get where I am today by discounting daft ideas. Hit me with it.'

EL1: 'Well, you know our recent policy has been to try to get back to original numbering on our core titles...'

JQ: 'Yeah, yeah... an idea that actually makes a modicum of sense. I don't know how I let that one slip by.'

EL1: 'And you know how we've been able to put all that Heroes Reborn and endless relaunch nonsense behind us with **Amazing Spidey** and **Fantastic Four**...?'

JQ: 'Indeed, small and meaningless one.'

EL1: 'Well, there's an opportunity coming up to get **Avengers** back on track with an issue 500.'

JQ: 'Let's do it. **Avengers** 500 has a nice ring to it.'

EL1: 'But that's not my great idea, boss.'

JQ: 'I thought not, you little devil. Too sensible, eh? I knew you wouldn't let me down.'

EL1 (blushing): 'I live to serve, master. Anyway, why not go for the 500... and then cancel it anyway and start at issue 1 again!'

JQ: 'Brilliant, I like it! It teases long-term readers into thinking we've come to our senses and then we hit them with the old double whammy. We'll have them yearning for Shooter's return before you know it.'

EL1: 'Then, when we get to issue 12 of the new title, we can convert it to issue 100 of Volume 3 until there's a neat opportunity to go to 600 of Volume 1 in seven or eight years.'

JQ: 'Hey, this gets better and better. We'll have the geeks anguishing over their indexing systems in no time. Who can we get to write the final arc?'

EL1: 'Boss, this is Marvel... who do you think?'

JQ: 'Of course – Bendy Brian. Can't spell for toffee but he's a willing boy.'

EL1: 'And let's have him kill all the peripherals so he can relaunch the title with only the core Marvel characters – you know, the ones we see in every other goddam book.'

JQ: 'Yeah, and let's make it a crossover with Cap, Iron Man and... who's that other guy, the one with the hammer...?'

EL1: 'Hercules?'

ELL1: 'I think it's Thor, but I haven't read it lately.'

JQ: 'Whoever he is, we can let Bendy assemble a team of hapless writers, create a crossover where nothing that happens in the core title bears any relation to what's going on elsewhere, then we cancel the lot of them, start again with our usual handpicked cronies and – best of all – go back to issue 1! That's brilliant, even if I say so myself. Several core titles at number 1, when we've told the fans we'll try to bump every title back to original numbering.'

EL1: 'You've got it, boss. This'll be the worst idea since Harras let a bunch of editors who couldn't write take over every single book.'

JQ: 'It's not enough, though. What else can we do to piss people off?'

ELL1: 'Well, I quite like it when we get the simplest of things wrong, despite the fact that we've got sod all to do except produce the odd funny book.'

EL1: 'Yeah. How about 'Part 4 of 6' on Thor #84, when it's clearly part 5?'

JQ: 'Fantastic idea. Small but perfectly formed when it comes to ineptitude. Look how well that worked on Thanos #12. Of course, by then no-one was reading the title because we'd driven away Starlin.'

EL1: 'Why did we get rid of him, boss?'

JQ: 'Old timer – reminds today's readers of when our comics took longer than five minutes to read.'

EL1: 'Boss, you're a genius.'

JQ: 'And if any other old timers think they're getting any work on my new books, they can think again. Wolfman, Stern, Thomas, Englehart, the lot of' em. They're all too good. I'm gonna keep giving every title to Decompressed Bendy, that pig-ignorant Way bloke, Millar with an 'a' and that Ellis/Ennis fella. This stuff'll sell no matter which turkey writes them.'

EL1: 'May I fawn at your feet?'

JQ: 'You may'.

Believe it or not, this very conversation took place at the House of Ideas in March.

Or so I heard...

Mario Capaldi

David Jackson via e-mail:
j.davidjackson@ntlworld.com

IT WAS with personal regret that I heard of the death of Mario Capaldi, as reported in **CI** #175.

I first knew his name from a memorable single black and white illustration in **Science Fiction Monthly** (Vol 2 #2) in 1975, and back then I'd imagined he might have been working out of a studio in, say, Milan or somesuch...

But in 1982 it transpired that a neighbour's daughter was dating Mario Capaldi's nephew and the artist himself lived only a couple or so miles away in Middlesbrough!

Despite this, we never actually met – 'he never saw anybody' (pressure of work and all) – although he did in fact phone me around that time and we had a fairly wide-ranging conversation.

His work was probably largely unknown to the wider comics audience and **CI**'s piece by David A. Roach was mostly new information to me and deserving of appreciation for its diligent research.

If I can be allowed one minor quibble with the headline (blame the sub-ed): "UK-based Italian comics artist dies" – despite his name, how Italian could a man with a decidedly Glaswegian accent be?

Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel	www.artbabe.com
Neal Adams	www.nealadams.com
Kyle Baker	www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale	www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art	www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright	www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell	www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday	www.johncassaday.com
Gene Colan	www.genecolan.com
Chuck Dixon	www.dixonverse.com
Will Eisner	www.willeisner.tripod.com
Warren Ellis	www.warrenellis.com
Phil Foglio	www.studiofoglio.com
Jon Haward	www.jonhawardart.com
Jeff Jones	www.jeffreyjones.com
Bob Layton	www.boblayton.com
Joseph Michael Linsner	www.linsner.com
Tom Lyle	www.tomlyle.com
Scott McCloud	www.scottmcloud.com
Grant Morrison	www.grant-morrison.com
Alex Ross Art	www.alexrossart.com
Dave Stevens	www.davestevens.com
William Stout	www.williamstout.com
Bryan Talbot	www.bryan-talbot.com
Barry Windsor-Smith	www.barrywindsor-smith.com
Bernie Wrightson	www.berniewrightson.com

Comics publishers

Abstract Studios	www.strangersinparadise.com
AC Comics	www.accomics.com
Acclaim	ww.acclaim.com/comics
AiT/Planet Lar	www.astronautsintrouble.com
Antarctic Press	www.antarctic-press.com
AP Comics	www.apcomics.com
Archie Comic Publications	www.archiecomics.com
Caliber Comics	www.calibercomics.com
Cartoon Books	www.boneville.com
Chaos!	www.chaoscomics.com
com.x	www.comxcomics.com
CrossGen	www.crossgen.com
Crusade Entertainment	www.shiweb.com
Dark Horse	www.darkhorse.com
DC Comics	www.dccomics.com
Drawn and Quarterly	www.drawnandquarterly.com
Dynamic Forces	www.dynamicforces.com
Fantagraphics	www.fantagraphics.com
Harris Comics	www.vampirella.com
Heavy Metal	www.heavymetal.com
Knockabout Comics	www.knockabout.com
Marvel Comics	www.marvel.com
Northern Lightz	www.northernlightz.com
Oni Press	www.onipress.com
Pulp Theatre	www.pulptheatre.com
Quality/Warrior	www.comicsinternational.com
Sirius Entertainment	www.sirius.choiceoneonline.com
Todd McFarlane Productions	www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics	www.topcow.com
TwoMorrows	www.twomorrows.com
2000 AD	www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA)	www.viz.com
Viz (UK)	www.viz.co.uk
WildStorm Comics	www.wildstorm.com

Manga and anime

AD Vision	www.advfilms.com
MVM	www.mvm-uk.co.uk

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On-line auctions

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Heritage Comics Auctions	www.heritagecomics.com

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The newest truly online auction system, dedicated to the collectible marketplace
.... www.near-mint.com

Fantasy art and books

THE DRAGONS GALLERY
'Shop online' for original comic art, lithos, manga, fantasy and gothic art
.... www.thedragonsgallery.co.uk

New and back issue dealers

Ace Comics	www.acecomics.net
Avalon Comics	www.avaloncomics.co.uk

CHAOS CITY COMICS
Award-winning site. High grade Silver Age items and Dave Gibbons original art
.... www.chaoscitycomics.com

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.... www.goldustcomics.com

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....www.incognitocomics.co.uk

Krypton Komics	www.kryptonkomics.com

MEGA-CITY COMICS
Largest graphic novel catalogue in the country – fast and easy online shopping
.... www.megacitycomics.co.uk

Mighty World of Comicana	www.comicana.com

OBSCURE COMICS
For those comics that you can't find anywhere. Cheap too!
.... www.obscurecomics.com

OK Comics	www.okcomics.co.uk

OTAKU.CO.UK
Secure online shopping for the latest anime, manga and game collectables direct from Japan .... www.otaku.co.uk

Page 45	www.page45.com

QUICKSILVER COMICS
The specialist Silver and Bronze Age site. Over 100,000 items listed, all with cover images .... www.qscomics.com

SILVER ACRE COMICS
Over 900,000 comics in stock, 110,000 different items listed online
.... www.silveracre.com

Speeding Bullet	www.speedingbulletcomics.co.uk

On-line comics companies:

By popular demand, **Comics International** now runs an at-a-glance overview of the major sites for on-line comics collectors and creators. Have your company listed for only £5 (US $8) a month. Bookable in six-issue blocks, companies wishing to be included should send £30 or US $40 (UK: please add £5.25 to cover VAT) with trading name and website address.

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Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines
ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR. Mon-Wed 10-7; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-7; Sun 12-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, sci-fi/fantasy, books, video/DVD, games, mags, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

Orbital, 9 Old Compton Street, London W1. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Star Wars) 020 7434 9363

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Ashcan Ltd, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Tues-Wed/Fri 12-5; Thurs 9-6; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 0845 166 2532

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE. Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers) 020 8952 7181

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Tues-Wed 11-6; Thurs 10.30-7; Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

They Walk Among US, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi/horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 020 8788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics, 162 High Street, Watford WD17 2EG. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Chaos City, 20 Heritage Close, (off High Street), St Albans, Herts AL3 4EB. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri 10-7.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01727 838719

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JN. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, CCG, toys) 01628 777998

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Daydream Nation Trading Cards at Hive, 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL. Mon-Sat 10-6 (CCGs, cards, sports, Ultra-Pro) 01273 687 877

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Phoenix Fantasy, 9 Market Street, Margate, Kent CT9 1EU. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch) 01843 224768

Planet Ace, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Steve's Comics, The Bookstall, Beckenham Junction Station, Rectory Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1HY. Mon-Fri 6-7; Sat 7-5 (back – Marvel, DC – ind, British comics, tpbk) 07977 751442

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand video games) 01753 521594

Time Trek, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed/Fri 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, CCG, prl, sf TV/film) 020 8313 0677

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Close Encounters, 59 Midland Road, Bedford MK10 1PW. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, merch, video, DVDs, action figures, t-shirts, trading cards) 01234 270777

Comic Culture, The Mall, 257-259 High Street, Lincoln LN2 1HX. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl) 01522 546611

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Wed 9.30-6; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 024 76229672

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 0115 958 4706

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

MOVED **FPI Derby**, 1/2 The Corn Exchange, Albert Street, Derby DE1 2DS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film/TV memorabilia, video games) 01332 206606

FPI Hanley, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381

FPI Leicester, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0116 2515266

MOVED **FPI Nottingham**, 19-23 Friar Lane, Nottingham NG1 6DA. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 0115 9484122

FPI Wolverhampton, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, merch, videos) 07796 854644

Batcave, 39 Penny Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6HQ. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01254 667488

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (two floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 1DW. Mon/Tues/Thurs-Sat (Sundays in June-Oct only) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books 'N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9.30- 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

OK Comics, 19 Thorntons Arcade, Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LQ. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl) 0113 2469366

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Tues/Thurs-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek specialists) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904 628787

2Tone Comics, 40 Market Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6AA. Sat-Sun 10.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, merch, CGC) 01422 845666

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

NEW **American Graffiti**, 78 Church Lane, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1BH. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01271 325740

Area 51, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5; Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249 701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452 410232

Fantasyland Comics, Unit 4, The Colwell Centre, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8NJ. Mon-Fri 11-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch)

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 023 80230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed); Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 023 92422731

Into the Void, 11 Rodbourne Road, Swindon SN2 2AG. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, CCG, merch) 01793 434363

Kaboom, 65 High Street, Totnes, Devon TQ10 9PU. (new, back, action figures, t-shirts, board games, RPG, import video games, mail order) 01803 863049

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High St, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202 661346

Wonderworld, 540 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch, film/TV/media, beanie babies) 01202 394918

Wales

Cardiff's Comic Guru Presents!, 20-22 Wyndham Arcade, Cardiff CF10 1FJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-9; Fri-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 029 202 29119

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (eves)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri 10-5.30; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 202 28885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 12 years) 01633 222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon 10-8; Tues-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-8; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224 574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224 622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786 447687

Kapow!, 28 Allison Street, Govanhill, Glasgow G42 8NN (off Pollokshaws Rd). Tues-Sat 11-6 (buy and sell back, gn, ind, mags, videos, DVDs, new and second-hand books, merch) 0141 4241600

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Wed 10-5; Thurs 10-6; Fri-Sat 10-5; Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) tel/fax: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Mon-Sat 11.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 52-54 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EG Mon-Wed 9-5.30; Thurs 9-8.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 1-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 028 90438744

Planet Ace Derry, 33 Shipquat St, Derry, Londonderry BT48 6DF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 02871 369787

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Boulevard, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham. ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch)(00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk)(00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (**FPI** associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville, TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl)(00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651

Direct Market Retailers:

Comics International's Retail Index is THE international retail reference source for collectors, creators, publishers and journalists. Through it you can reach over 40,000 dedicated readers each issue for only £6 (US $10) a month! Bookable in six-issue blocks, retailers wishing to be included should send US $60 or £36 (UK: please add £6.30 to cover VAT @ 17.5%) plus shop information as detailed on previous page to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch)(0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG)(0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch)(0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g)(0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch)(0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

October 9-10: Belgium

FACTS 2004, ICC Citadelpark, 9000 Gent. Organisers: Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. 0032 2 534 63 67. www.facts-convention.com

October 15-17: Poland

THE 15TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF COMICS. Organisers: Lodzki Dom Kultury, Traugutta 18, 90-113 Lodz, Poland. 004842 633 98 00. festiwal@ldk.lodz.pl

October 16-17: England

LONDON EXPO, ExCel Convention Centre, Royal Victoria Dock, London. Organisers: London Expo (EW), PO Box 38727, London E10 7YH. 020 8523 1074. www.londonexpo.com

October 22-24: England

LONDON COMIC FESTIVAL, Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury. Organisers: Comic Festival, PO Box 48, Clevedon, Bristol BS21 7LQ. www.comicfestival.co.uk

November 5-7: England

COMIC EXPO, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol. Organisers: Area 51 & Comics International. 01179 244655. E-mail: comicexpo@fsmail.net. Website: http://comicexpo.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk

November 13-14: Scotland

MEMORABILIA '04, The SECC, Glasgow. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk

November 27-28: England

MEMORABILIA '04, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk

January 27-30: France

ANGOULEME BD. Organisers: Festival International de la Bande Dessinee, 2 Place d l'Hotel de Ville, 16000 Angouleme, France. 0033 05 45 97 86 50. E-mail: b.monchart@labd.com. www.bdangouleme.com

February 25-27: United States

MEGACON 2005, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida. Organisers MegaCon, PO Box 1097, Safety Harbor, FL 34695, USA. 001 727 796 5725. www.megaconvention.com

April: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk Date: TBA

May 13-15: England

COMIC EXPO 2, British Empire and Commonwealth Exhibition Hall and Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol. Organisers: Area 51 & Comics International. 01179 244655. E-mail: comicexpo@fsmail.net. Website: http://comicexpo.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk

May: Spain

THE 22ND BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL COMIC FESTIVAL. (2003 est: 85,000). Organisers: Ficomic, Palau, 4 Baixos, 08002 Barcelona, Spain. 0034 93 301 23 69. www.ficomic.com Date: TBA

May: Finland

ARCTIC COMICS FESTIVAL, KEMI. Organisers: The Arctic Comics Centre, Rautatienkatu 13 B, FIN-90100 Oulu, Finland. 00358 400 514 540. www.kemi.fi/sarjis Date: TBA

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensely, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact telephone numbers are given where readily available. Website details can be found on the first page of the directory section.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant)
(00)1 516 656 5000

AiT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels)
(00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative titles and graphic novels)
(00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked)
(00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Parkway, Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga titles)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour titles)
(00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, IL 61802 (horror and fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2216

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and Futurama and related humour titles)
(00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles)
(00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related titles)

CROSSGEN ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy and adventure titles)
(00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure)
(00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure, licensed, US and Japanese manga)
(00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour titles, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4SB, Canada (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 11 Allstate Parkway, Suite 200, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T8, Canada (adventure titles)

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and limited edition merchandise)
(00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult titles)
(00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror titles)
(00)1 212 807 7100

HEAVY METAL, 100 North Village Road, Suite 12, Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)

IMAGE COMICS, 1071 North Batavia Street, Suite A, Orange, CA 92867 (adventure titles)
(00)1 714 2880200

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 10th Floor, East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed titles) (00)1 212 5764000

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure titles)

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB #117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 3487195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 834, Stanhope, NJ 07802 (adult titles)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 577 South Market Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (black and white fantasy titles)
(00)1 9718929

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical titles) (00)1 770 4276395

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614 (comics feature and history magazines and books)
tel: (00)1 919 449 0344
fax: (00) 1 919 449 0327

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga titles)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 2600 South Road, Suite 44/242, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-off titles)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

AP COMICS, Suite 3, 7 French Row, St Albans, Herts AL3 5DU (adventure titles)

COM.X, The Dickens Inn, Kirk Street, London WC1N 2DG (adventure titles) 020 7831 7777

DC THOMSON, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)
020 7907 6000

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, Fourth Floor, 184-192 Drummond Street, London NW1 3HP (humour, licensed and pre-school titles)
020 7380 6430

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (graphic novels) 020 7531 8400

JOHN BROWN CITRUS PUBLISHING, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR (albums)
020 7565 3000

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour titles and underground comix and graphic novels)
020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UJ (humour and adventure comics, Marvel licensed titles)
01892 500100

PULP THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT, Mermaid Court, 1 Mermaid House, London Bridge, London SE1 1HR (adventure titles) 020 7403 0378

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN (Judge Dredd The Megazine and 2000 AD)
01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comics magazines, books and graphic novels)
0161 445 5771

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics)
020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums)
(0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 36 rue du Chemin Vert, 75011, Paris (albums and manga titles)

DARGAUD, 15-27 rue Moussorgski, 75018 Paris (albums and manga titles)
tel: (0033) 1 53 26 32 32
fax: (0033) 1 53 26 32 00

DELCOURT, 54 rue d'Hauteville, 75010 Paris (albums and comics)
tel: (0033) 1 56 03 92 20
fax: (0033) 1 56 03 92 30

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums)
(0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31-33 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy-Les-Moulineaux (albums and manga titles)
tel: (0033) 1 41 46 11 41
fax: (0033) 1 41 46 11 13

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga titles) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 5 Passage Piver, 75011 Paris (albums)
tel: (0033) 1 49 29 88 88
fax: (0033) 1 49 29 88 89

SEMIC FRANCE, 44316 Nantes Cedex 03 (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 2 51 86 14 14

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed titles)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed titles)
(0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga titles)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums)
0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums)
0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s = wholesale available
dis = bulk discount terms
cat = phone/write for catalogue
s-cat = sae for catalogue
wants = wants lists accepted
s-wants = sae with wants lists
CoBRA = Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
cc = major credit cards accepted
sae = send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through Detective Comics *#225 (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and* Showcase *#4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.*

NEW **Colmore Comics & Collectables**, PO Box 11240, Birmingham B37 7ZT (cat, cc, high grade, CGC) 0121 767 1803 fax: 0121 767 1910

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970 to date: From Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Gimmick Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Comix-shop. co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QJ (cc, CoBRA) 020 7924 3609

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

86th Floor Comics & Cards, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR (s-cat cc) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse,* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n, cat) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP. (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 01487 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse,* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat) 020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ (graphic novels, art books, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8829 3000

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a six-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

- All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

- FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) .... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
(ii) List ads: Including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) .... £10.00 ($15.00 US)

Full payment, to Comics International, must accompany wordage.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

Comicbook clearout. Almost 10,000 comics in lots of 10 kilograms (approx 160 comics). From £30 per lot. Over 10 types of lot: Marvel, DC, indies, mixed, Dark Horse, Eclipse, First, Malibu, Valiant, Vertigo, teams, superhero, mutant, Superman, Batman, annuals, plus many others. For full details call 01902 335027 after 4pm or send an sae to 9 Highlands Road, Wolverhampton WV3 8AH.

Bringing comic mart mentality to your doorstep. Four long boxes of comics priced at 25p, 45p, 60p and 95p each. A nice diverse selection at very affordable prices. No sae required, just write or call for my list. Contact Anthony Pick, 20 Grove Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2DT or call 0151 632 4640. Trades on your read and unwanted comics always considered.

Free comics with all orders. Hundreds of US comics for sale at low prices. For your free catalogue write to R. Harris, The Spinney, Dalby Road, Partney, Spilsby, Lincolnshire PE23 4PQ. Tel: 01790 752916

Bored with pseudo-underground comics? Get un-bored with the real thing! Visit www.russang.supanet.com or send an sae to A. Greeno, 21 Beck Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 7QW.

For sale: Japanese comics (1980s) 58 copies in very good condition and better – £100; **Comic Buyers Guide** (1983) complete run in top condition – £150 post paid; Batman gum cards from the 1967 movie in mint condition – £10 each; Batman drinking glasses (1967) four different designs in 'as new' condition – £50 each. Comic paperbacks: **Mighty Thor**, **Hulk** (Four Square, 1967) near mint – £20 each; **Batman** (Signet, 1966) good condition – £20; **Illustrated Harlan Ellison** (1980) fine – £20. Jeffrey Jones fantasy art trading cards (1993) 12 unopened packets, each containing 10 cards – £8 each. **Collected Works of Buck Rogers** American hardcover (1969) mint – £75. Prices include postage. John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Thousands of gaming cards in exchange for your read comics. ***The Crow***, ***Dr Who***, ***Magic The Gathering Revised***, ***Star Trek: The Next Generation*** and ***Star Wars Premier***. Rares, uncommon and common cards at an exchange rate of 30 cards (mixed) per comic. Contact Anthony, 20 Grove Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2DT. Tel: 0151 632 4640

Wanted: **Picture Library** comics, **Pearson Library**, **Battleground**, **Attack**, **Conflict**, **Combat Library**. Call Jim on 020 8330 3788 after 7pm.

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

Palaeolithic: interested in the Ice Age? Artist wanted to draw a 20-page strip with a **Clan of the Cave Bear** feel to it. Busty babes versus dinosaurs this isn't! For more information contact Amanda Kear, Flat 11, Beaufort Court, 1 Neaufort Street (off Stapleton Road), Easton, Bristol BS5 0SQ.

Visit the wonderful world of the dailies, as **Comics Retrospective** 9 (and its guest host, Axa) look back at *Jane*, *Garth* and the heroes of the British newspaper strip. Plus, *The Avengers File* continues. Available now, £1.40 from Tony Ingram, 3 Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1QE.

Artist wanted to collaborate with writer on professional comics strip to send to major publishers. Send photocopied art samples to J.A. Short, 20 Grants Avenue, Bournemouth BH1 4NR.

Cartoonist/comics artist seeking work/collaboration. Most things considered. Samples available on request. Martin Street, 30 Farmhouse Road, Short Heath, Willenhall WV12 4AU.

Parataxis 2! Re-presenting two of Bionic Comics' super series, **Parataxis**! The first adventure of the super students continues as dreams turn into reality and Martin's killer is revealed – and who is Sharma Tuktuk? Send two first class stamps to Peter, 94 Tippet Rise, Reading RG2 0DZ. Or e-mail bioniccomics@hotmail.com.

Planet of the Apes fanzine **Simian Scrolls 9 – The Comics Special**! Introduction by Roy Thomas and interviews with John Bolton and Herb Trimpe, and many others. £3 (including p&p) from John Roche, Mediation House, 74 Stockwell Road, Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire SA72 6TQ.

Varicose Brain version 01 only £2. Nope, I didn't think you'd be interested... so let's try bribery! Free comic to the first 20 buyers! No jive turkey!? **Thor** 183 fn, **Thor vs Doc Doom**, **Daredevil: Yellow** 1-6, **Dracula Lives** 7, **Daredevil Marvel Must Haves** 41-43 and more! Don't feel derrrrty! You get a free comic, I win a bet! Laird Poland, 11 Kilndale Terrace, Kirkcudbright DG6 4BX.

Stories from the **Haunted Hospital** 1 (limited and numbered). Macabre! What's happening? Is it dead? Five stories/16 A5 pages. Send two first class stamps to Lee Hardcastle, 43 Christopher Road, Woodhouse, Leeds LS6 2JX. Or e-mail haunted_hospital@hotmail.com.

Original comicbook art. Always wished you could afford the prices? Now you can. Stunning images of your favourite characters or from your own designs. Example art available on request. Call 07833 111549 for details.

Bingo Bonanza 1. Enjoy the thought of seeing celebrities meeting violent and painful deaths? Then wait no longer. £2 plus 50p postage will get you a copy of **BB**1 (**BB**2 scheduled for later this year, so hurry!). A. Esmond (call me Ez), 84 Ash Tree Way, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7SX. Or e-mail esmond.a@btinternet.co.uk

Wanted for non-profit fanzine: pencillers and inkers. I have scripts and character designs waiting for the right candidates. Please forward your six-page samples (panel work as well as pin-ups, please) to Christopher Herbert, 9 Stretton Road, Leicester.

Like pirates? Monkeys? Then try **Pirate Monkeys** 1 – out now in glorious full colour and packed full of giant squid, 'romance', Tom Waits, Charles Darwin, ancient Aztec rock apes and lunchables! Don't miss the next merchandising juggernaut! 28 pages, painted cover, plus free tattoo – and all for only £3.50 plus an A5 sae from Richard J. Smith, 196 Balby Road, Doncaster DN4 0NE.

Tuppenny Rice 1 is here! An eclectic mix of the sublime, the strange and the obtuse. Zombies, an atomic death robot, a tragic Victorian heroine, vampire slugs, a ninja nun and a mechanically recovered chicken all make their debut together in **Tuppenny Rice**. www.tuppennyrice.co.uk

Inker wanted to work on humour strip for submission to US syndicates. Please send samples (copies not originals) to Captain Wonder Cartoons, 31 Dalboyne Pk, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 3BU or e-mail captainwondercartoons@hotmail.com.

Big War Comics 1 – "Tally ho, cadets!" Join Major Bloodshed and heroes who may die at any minute, for this thrilling almost true wartime adventure. 32 A4 pages, with colour cover (and free warmongering gift) only £3 plus 50p postage from P. Scott, 13 Kiln Crescent, Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill, Co. Durham DL17 9AP.

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £18 per year (cheques to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. E-mail: rsheaf@npg.org.uk

The Comics Creators Guild for industry veterans and aspiring professionals, the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further info contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

BUY OR SELL OR EVEN TRADE

It's been tried and tested for over 10 years and it's still going strong...

Comics International's *Classified* section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time full page dealer.

One of the first-read sections of the magazine for both dealers and fans, *Classified* offers you the opportunity to add a part time job to boost your finances.

Most comic fans have unwanted titles taking up valuable space...

... A loft which is in need of clearing.

... A spare room which is no longer spare.

... A garage which is pining for a car.

Classified can help you not only clear that space, but earn you money while doing so. More than 4,500 such ads have been placed on this page, with regular dealers coming back each issue.

It costs only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 for a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them...

So, what are you waiting for? Everybody else to jump in first?

... It's up to you!

Comic & Card Events
FREE ADMISSION TO ALL SHOWS
DOORS OPEN 12 NOON
OVER 160 TABLES

THE NATIONAL COLLECTORS MARKETPLACE™

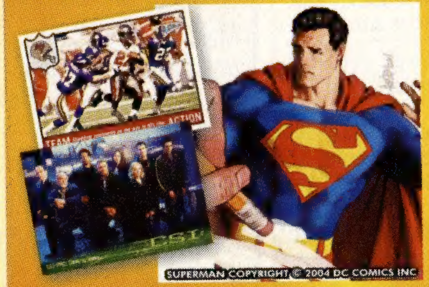
2004
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7

ALSO
SUNDAY OCTOBER 3

ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL
BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1

With over 160 tables, the National is the largest regular marketplace for comicbook and trading card collectors in the U.K. You will also find a whole range of related materials including TV, Film, Fantasy, Sci-fi and Toys from leading British & international dealers.
A refreshments counter and bar will be open next to the venue.

2000 AD
ACTION
ANIME
BABYLO
BEANIE
BRITISH
BUFFY
COMIC
GAMING CARDS
GOLDEN AGE COMICS
HEROCLIX
LATEST IMPORT COMICS
MANGA
NON-SPORTS CARDS
ORIGINAL ARTWORK
POKEMON
POSTERS
SILVER AGE COMICS
SPORTS CARDS
SCI FI/FANTASY
STAR TREK
STAR WARS
TOYS
TRADING CARD SUPPLIES
VIDEOS
YU-GI-OH


SUPERMAN COPYRIGHT © 2004 DC COMICS INC

HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 68, 91, 168 or 188 to Woburn Place. UNDERGROUND: Piccadilly Line to Russell Square. NATIONAL RAIL: Euston and Kings Cross are within walking distance of the venue.

FUTURE DATES: 7TH NOVEMBER
5TH DECEMBER 2004

COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE & CARD MART

2005
SUNDAY JANUARY 16

ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL
BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1

120+ DEALERS TABLES!

The Comicbook Marketplace is moving to a bigger and better location in 2005, the Royal National Hotel, home of our sister, event, the National Collector's Marketplace.
There will be at least 120+ tables with over 1,000,000 comicbooks, magazines and trading cards on sale, including S.F., Fantasy, Film and T.V. related items from Britain's top dealers.

HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 10, 17, 30, 45, 46, 63, 73, 91, 214, or 259 to Kings Cross/Camden Town Hall. UNDERGROUND: Circle, Metropolitan, Piccadilly or Victoria Line to Kings Cross. BRITISH RAIL: Euston, Kings Cross and St. Pancras are within walking distance of the venue.

BIG CHANGES ARE COMING IN 2005
Register on our website for updates

Dealers: for table availability phone 020 747 66 873

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

October

2/10 Cosford: Jeff Hawke Exhibition, Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire .... (p21)

2/10 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds .... (p56)

2/10 Oxford: DreddCon 5, Oxford Union Society, St Michael's Street ..... (p11)

3/10 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way .... (p66)

9/10 Glasgow: Glasgow Comic & Toy Fair, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow .... (p38)

16/10 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road .... (p56)

23/10 Sheffield: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) .... (p56)

30/10 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham .... (p56)

November

5/11 Bristol: ProCon 1, Ramada Hotel, Bristol .... (p67)

6-7/11 Bristol: Comic Expo, Ramada Hotel, Bristol .... (p67)

7/11 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way .... (p66)

13/11 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds .... (p56)

20/11 Birmingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Clarendon Suites, Hagley Road, Birmingham .... (p56)

27/11 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road .... (p56)

28/11 Glasgow: Glasgow Comic & Toy Fair, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow .... (p38)

December

4/12 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester .... (p56)

5/12 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool .... (p56)

5/12 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way .... (p66)

11/12 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds .... (p56)

18/12 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham .... (p56)

January 2005

16/1 London: Comicbook Marketplace & Card Mart, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way .... (p66)

22/1 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester .... (p56)

23/1 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool .... (p56)

Please note: the above listing of UK comics, trading card and related events is free to Comics International display advertisers only.

LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON COMICS-RELATED EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD? SEE OUR INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL GUIDE ON PAGE 62.

Stop press: Ghost Rider co-creator MIKE PLOOG confirmed!

EAGLE AWARDS 2004

ADMISSION: £5 FOR THE FULL EXPO WEEKEND*

*excludes Friday ProCon events

ART: HENRY FLINT   Incredible Hulk © Marvel Characters, Inc

COMIC EXPO

plus ProCon 1

Comic Expo Variant (Limited to 500 copies!)

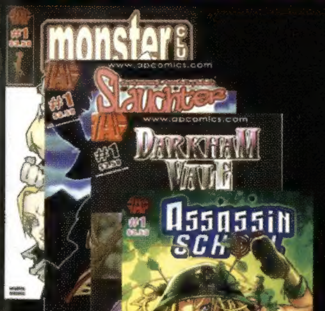
SIMON BISLEY: sketching & signing his comic FULL CIRKLE

MIKE CAREY on HELLBLAZER: from Vertigo comic to Hollywood movie

Artist TREVOR HAIRSINE on creating the ULTIMATE NIGHTMARE

Fifty years in British comics. From WULF THE BRITON to NIKOLAI DANTE

Upfront with JOHN M. BURNS

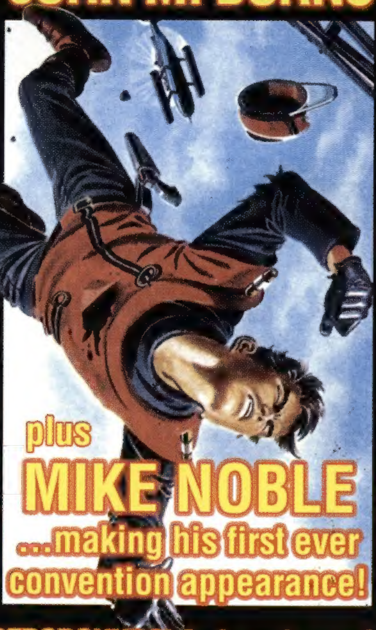


AP £12 SAMPLER PACK! Free to first 500 attendees: four AP colour comics!

EXPO GOODIE BAG: Free at the door -- comics, books, magazines and more!

Comics creators talk about launching a new hit UK indie title in the States: "Let's Go To San Diego!"

BRODIES LAW



plus **MIKE NOBLE** ...making his first ever convention appearance!

Plus authors and artists on 2000 AD! TRANSFORMERS! MANGA! THUNDERBIRDS! UNDERGROUNDS! And much more!

NOVEMBER 5-7

ProCon 1

Free for pro and semi-pro creators

FRIDAY 5/11:
Noon til very late

COMIC EXPO

SAT 6/11: 12 Noon - 6:00pm
SUN 7/11: 11:00am - 5:00pm

The Venue:

Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol (01179 260 041)
3 minutes from Temple Meads railway station
Comic Expo room rates: £55 (single) £65 (double)

Info: 0117 924 4655

For full creator/events listing, log on to http://comicexpo.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/

Because of personal commitments, US artist Gene Colan is unable to attend and apologises to his UK fans

DAILY BUGLE
SPIDER-MAN:
HERO OR MENACE?

premier
collection

Spider-Man™ Statue

Sculptor Clayburn Moore joins Diamond Select Toys in examining the duality of Marvel Comics' web-slinger with his very first statue featuring the amazing Spider-Man™!

Although he's one of the Marvel Universe's premiere heroes, Spider-Man is also Peter Parker – a photographer working for *The Daily Bugle*. To pay the bills, he has to photograph himself as the wall-crawler for his day job – although the newspaper that employs him is also out to ruin Spidey's good name with the people he protects!

Limited to 5,000 pieces. Stands approximately 16" tall (from the base to the top of the street lamp). Includes a full-color, hand-numbered Certificate of Authenticity.

in stores
October 2004.

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